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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS STUDIES
IN THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES

VOL. VII

DECEMBER, 1918

No. 4

THE JOURNEYMEN TAILORS' UNION
OF AMERICA

A STUDY IN TRADE UNION POLICY

BY
CHARLES JACOB STOWELL, PH.D

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The Journeymen Tailors' Union of America

A Study in Trade Union Policy

CHARLES JACOB STOWELL

PREFACE

In the writer's *Studies in Trade Unionism in the Custom Tailoring Trade*, published as a Master's thesis in 1913, is found an account of the rise and growth of tailors' unions in England and America, also material dealing with the economic history of the tailoring trade, and with recent conditions in this trade, including statistics of the present national union. The present thesis is a continuation of studies in the same general field, and is designed to give an account of the policy of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America on the subjects of collective bargaining, helpers and apprentices, and jurisdictional questions. The policy of the union is first considered with reference to the interests of the journeymen tailors themselves, but in the concluding chapter an effort is made to indicate the most important consequences of this policy upon the industry at large and upon the consumer.

The officers and members of the Tailors' Union have been of great assistance in the preparation of this study, especial thanks being due to Mr. Thomas Sweeney, secretary of the union, and to Messrs. John B. Lennon and E. J. Brais, former secretaries. The writer also wishes to express his appreciation of criticism and advice given by members of the Economics Seminar, University of Illinois.

CHARLES JACOB STOWELL

University of Illinois
May, 1917

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INTRODUCTION

*Historical Sketch of Tailors' Unions in America*¹

The journeymen tailors were among the first tradesmen in America to organize. There was a strike of tailors in Baltimore in 1795, and again in 1805.² By 1806 there were at least three tailors' societies—one in Philadelphia, one in New York and one in Boston.³ Between this date and the Civil War a number of other local societies of tailors were organized, and enjoyed a more or less continuous and successful career. In Buffalo in 1824,⁴ and in Philadelphia in 1827,⁵ the tailors were involved in interesting conspiracy trials. A similar trial growing out of a tailors' strike in New York City in 1835 had important political consequences, which were closely connected with the general workingman's movement of about that date.⁶ The labor movement among the tailors appears in most respects to have followed the trend of the movement in general during the years 1825-1860, although there is no evidence that the tailors took part in the temporary attempt at national federation of trade unions in

¹ This sketch in the main is condensed from material in the writer's *Studies in Trade Unionism in the Custom Tailoring Trade*.

² McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, vol. III, p. 511.

³ The Philadelphia union is stated to have been the first by the Colorado Commissioner of Labor, who probably obtained his information from officers of the Tailors' Union in Denver. The Philadelphia union was composed mainly of English tailors, who until its organization had retained their membership in English unions. (Colo., *Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 1899-1900, p. 336.) The New York union is vouched for by Professor Carlton (*History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 17), and the Boston union by its present officers and members, who celebrated the Centennial in 1906 (*Tailor*, November 1906, p. 17).

⁴ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. IV, pp. 93-95.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 99-264.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. V, Introduction, pp. 36-37.

1834-1837.⁷ We must turn to a later date for the real beginning of the national movement on the part of the tailors.

The first national union of tailors of which we have any record was formed in 1865 in Philadelphia, and was known as "The Journeymen Tailors' National Trades Union."⁸ The convention at which this union was founded was composed of delegates from the following cities: New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Worcester, Troy, Cincinnati, and Louisville. The union held conventions every year from 1865 to 1876 inclusive, but disintegrated after 1876, largely on account of the embezzlement of the funds by an officer in 1875.

A period now ensued of about seven years, including a part of 1883, during which there was no national union in the tailoring trade. The local unions, however, continued their activity, and we have the record of strikes in several localities widely separated.⁹ In 1883 the national movement was resumed on the initiative of the Philadelphia local, which issued a call for a convention to meet in that city the second Monday in August, 1883. Five local unions responded: Philadelphia, New York, Troy, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh. Officers were elected and constitution and by-laws adopted.¹⁰ The new organization was entitled "The Journeymen Tailors' National Union of the United States." This union, with some changes of title, has existed continuously until the present date.

In the first few years following the organization of the union

⁷ For a good summary of the period 1825-1840, cf. Andrews and Bliss, "History of Women in Trade Unions," p. 21, in *Report on Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners in the United States*, vol. X; and for the period 1840-1860, *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁸ The term "national union" in 1865 appears to have been used to describe the convention or delegate body rather than the aggregate of all the affiliated locals and members. Cf. the following from the constitution adopted in 1865, Art. 2, sec. 1: "The members of the National Union shall be composed of its elective officers, and representatives from local unions."

⁹ Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, New York, Dubuque, Washington, Denver, Des Moines, Freeport (Ill.), Philadelphia.

¹⁰ It is possible that this constitution and by-laws were not printed. The writer has relied for his account of the convention upon an article written in 1893 by one of the delegates, and the earliest constitution of the present national union that he has seen is dated 1884.

it succeeded in affiliating nearly all detached locals already in existence,¹¹ and continued to organize new locals as opportunity presented. Beginning in 1883 with five locals and about 1800 members, by 1893 it had acquired a strength of 200 locals and 10,200 members. In 1897, however, the next date for which statistics are reported, the number of locals was only 181, and the membership had decreased to about 5,700, the decline being due primarily to the effects of the panic of 1893.¹² In 1899 a slight recovery of membership was noticeable, and by 1901 the union had regained nearly the same strength as in 1893. From 1901 to 1904 progress was rapid, and on January 1, 1904, the maximum membership of about 16,000 was reached,¹³ although the maximum number of locals, 331, was not reached until 1907. Following 1907 there was a decline, both in the number of locals and in the number of members, which was due in part to financial depression, and in part to the rise of cheap systems of custom tailoring outside of union jurisdiction.

Since 1909 the membership has been about stationary, ranging from 12,000 to 13,000, the decline being arrested by a more vigorous organizing policy¹⁴ and by the determination of the Tailors' Union to organize workers on the cheaper systems. The latest report (June, 1916)¹⁵ indicates that there were on this date 283 local unions in good standing, located in 272 different cities in the United States and Canada,¹⁶ and containing about

¹¹ For a list of 53 local unions of which a record has been found as existing prior to the organization of the present national union, *cf.* Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59. To this list should be added the union in Madison, Wis., which was in existence as early as 1864. *Cf.* article by R. N. Qualey, in *The Tailor*, September, 1906, p. 8.

¹² One of the effects of the panic was the almost complete loss to the national union of the New York local, which withdrew after a disastrous strike in 1894 to resist a reduction in wages, and did not reaffiliate until September, 1903.

¹³ This maximum corresponds very nearly in date with the reaffiliation of the New York local.

¹⁴ The average annual expenditure for organizing purposes from 1909 to 1915 was \$23,956.94, as compared with \$13,769.98 for the period 1903-1909.

¹⁵ Furnished to the writer by Secretary Sweeney.

¹⁶ Two cities, Chicago and New Haven, contained each three local unions, and each of the following cities contained two local unions: Toronto, Buffalo, Boston, Pittsburgh, Washington, Denver, and San Francisco. In

13,000 members. New York, with 1,606 union members,¹⁷ and Chicago, with 1,134, were the only cities containing more than 1,000 members. Ten cities contained 200 to 1,000 each, and ten cities 100 to 200 each. The remaining 250 cities contained less than 100 members each, although many of them are large cities. This is an important commentary on the relative scarcity of skilled journeymen tailors, as well as the comparatively low per cent of organization in some communities — matters which will engage our attention more fully in the body of the thesis.¹⁸

the cities containing more than one local union the pressers, dyers and cleaners are organized in separate locals, and in one or two cases the bushelmen.

¹⁷ Since the June, 1916, report the membership of the New York union has been reduced to less than 1,000 as the result of an unsuccessful strike.

¹⁸ Cf. *infra*, Ch. I, pp. 24-26, and Ch. II, pp. 78-81.

CHAPTER I

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

In the present chapter the most important problems connected with collective bargaining in the custom tailoring trade will be taken up under topical heads and analyzed with reference to the policies and practices of the Journeymen Tailors' Union and its affiliated locals.

1. METHODS AND TERRITORIAL EXTENT OF BARGAINING

All negotiations with employers are carried on by representatives of the local or national union, and in no case by the individual members. This policy is clearly laid down in the constitution.¹

In small cities, and in small shops in large cities, there is generally no shop organization, and in such cases, if the tailors working in any shop wish to take up demands or grievances with their employer, they can bring the matter informally to the attention of the local union, which will then take the responsibility for further negotiations. Negotiations on behalf of the local union may be carried on by a standing committee or by a committee appointed for the occasion. Where the local union employs regularly a local organizer or business agent, this officer ordinarily takes charge of the negotiations, assisted by the committee. If an organizer of the national union is present he will act in an advisory capacity to the local officers and committees, and by action of the local union may be given charge of negotiations, with a status similar to that of the local business agent. It should be understood that in all of these cases the local union must approve the final settlement.

In large shops in the large cities there is frequently a shop organization known as the "shop meeting." Business affecting

¹ 1914, Secs. 79, 95, 131, and 153.

a given shop is transacted by the shop meeting, subject to the approval of the local union. In New York City, while mass meetings of all the members are called from time to time, a great deal of the business of the union is transacted by a delegate body composed of representatives from the several shop meetings.² Where shop meetings exist, therefore, negotiations with employers will frequently be handled through the shop meetings affected. If more than one shop is affected, but the demands are uniform in all, the different shops or shop meetings may in some cases form a conference committee to deal with a like committee from the employers. If the demands are not uniform, but different demands are to be presented in several different shops, there is usually some basis of classification, the demands being uniform for shops of a certain class; in this case there will sometimes be a conference committee of employees and of employers for each class of shops. Just what method of handling negotiations will be employed in each case will depend on circumstances, and will be governed in part by the kind of organization and the arrangements with respect to officers and committees prevailing in the local union.

In cases of negotiations involving all shops, or at any rate all union shops, in a city, negotiations on the employers' side are sometimes carried on by a committee representing the local employers' association, or Merchant Tailors' Exchange, as it is usually called.³ But this is not customary except in the larger cities. Where the merchant tailors are not organized, negotiations affecting all of the shops present no unusual features, unless the matter comes to a strike, in which case the merchant tailors often organize temporarily to safeguard their interests.

The Tailors' Union takes a favorable attitude toward carrying on negotiations with the local employers' associations. As early

² Some of the earlier issues of *The Tailor* contain lists of the shop meetings in large cities. For example, in 1891, there were 59 shop meetings in New York City, which met every week; and in Chicago there were 15 shop meetings, meeting usually every two weeks. *The Tailor*, May, 1891, inside back cover.

³ Secretary Samuel H. Spring of the National Association of Merchant Tailors says in correspondence with the writer: "Some of the local associations do have committees whose duty it is to care for strikes or disputes."

as 1889 Secretary Lennon² advocated conference committees of the unions on the one hand and of the employers' exchanges on the other, for the purpose of avoiding strikes;⁵ and in 1909 the convention and the membership adopted a resolution to the same effect.⁶

It has been impossible to bring about arrangements between the Tailors' Union and the national employers' associations for national conferences for the adjustment of disputes. In the early days of the Tailors' Union there was no apparent hostility between the employers' organization, then known as the Merchant Tailors' National Exchange,⁷ and the union. On the contrary, there appeared to be some grounds for coöperation, particularly in connection with tariff laws which were regarded as injurious to the trade, and with regard to the importation of English-made clothing, which required to be altered to fit American styles, and which the American journeymen had more than once refused to alter.⁸ In fact, representatives of the union took part on several occasions with representatives of the employers in conferences, and in one case in a mass meeting, for the purpose of securing changes in the tariff laws affecting the tailoring industry.⁹ However, by 1893 the exchange was recognized as an opponent by the union, and in his 1893 report¹⁰ Secretary Lennon, after remarking that during the preceding year there had been many conflicts between the union and the exchange, which had been expensive to both, recommended that the executive officers of the union should confer with the officers of the exchange and endeavor to formulate some plan of arbitration for

⁴ John B. Lennon was president of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America for the year 1884-1885, and general secretary for twenty-three years, from 1887-1910. The office of president was abolished in 1889, leaving the secretary as chief executive. For biographical sketch of Mr. Lennon, cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵ *The Tailor*, November, 1889, article on "The Evils of the Trade and how to Remedy Them."

⁶ *The Tailor*, August, 1909, p. 44, Proposition No. 40; vote, November, 1909, supplement.

⁷ Organized 1887.

⁸ *The Tailor*, August, 1891, p. 2, and August, 1893, p. 3, reports of general secretary on conference committees.

⁹ *The Tailor*, March, 1892, p. 4; April, 1892, p. 4; June, 1892, p. 4.

¹⁰ *The Tailor*, August, 1893.

the settlement of any difference that might arise. The result of this recommendation will appear in a later paragraph.

In 1896 the exchange endeavored to establish a mutual benefit fund for employees of its members, but this plan was viewed with suspicion by the union men, and seems to have met with little success.¹¹ In 1901, and again in 1903, Mr. Lennon repeated his recommendation that the exchange be approached on the subject of arbitration.¹² The 1903 committee on laws and audit¹³ approved specifically this recommendation, and the general secretary was instructed by the Executive Board to open correspondence with the Merchant Tailors' National Exchange.¹⁴

To understand the results of this correspondence it is necessary to note that in February, 1903, a new association of merchants was formed, known as the Merchant Tailors' National Protective Association, which was a characteristic "open-shop" association, organized for the purpose of releasing the merchant tailors from what they regarded as the domination of the unions.¹⁵ Not all of the local branches of the old Merchant Tailors'

¹¹ *The Tailor*, February, 1896, p. 6, and editorial, p. 8.

¹² *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 4, and August, 1903, p. 5, reports of general secretary on "Arbitration."

¹³ Proceedings, *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 15. Prior to 1894, constitutional questions were submitted to committees of the convention. In 1894 an amendment was passed providing for a special committee to meet before each convention, to be known as the committee on laws and audit. This committee was required to audit the books of the general officers, to examine proposed amendments to the constitution, and to make a report to the convention. In 1896 this committee was given power to take the place of a convention in years when the convention did not meet, and to send out such propositions as it approved for a general vote. In 1897, 1899, 1901, 1903, and 1907 the committee acted in this capacity, no conventions being held in these years. In 1909 the meetings of the committee between conventions were abolished, but its services before conventions are still retained.

¹⁴ Proceedings General Executive Board, *The Tailor*, September, 1903, p. 17.

¹⁵ The following is quoted in *The Tailor*, May, 1903, p. 9, as a correct description of the principles of the Merchant Tailors' National Protective Association, reprinted from its literature:

"In the association's declaration of principles any intention to interfere with the 'proper functions' of labor organizations is disclaimed. It is also set forth that strikes and lockouts are absolutely disapproved of, and that no question will be arbitrated with men on strike; no lockout will be countenanced on any arbitrable question unless arbitration has failed; workmen

National Exchange joined the Protective Association, but for the time being the latter association took up the functions of an employers' association in the trade. The communication, therefore, of the Tailors' secretary, addressed to the exchange, and suggesting the adoption of a system of arbitration, was referred to the Protective Association. The reply of the Protective Association, together with some references to the previous experience of the union with the exchange, is indicated by the following extract from Secretary Lennon's report to the 1905 convention:¹⁶

Their officers [i. e., the officers of the Protective Association] answered to the effect that nothing could be done with the matter until their coming convention which was held in February 1903. Immediately after that I received a communication stating in essence that they could not take the matter up for the reason that there were some things declared for in our

will not be discriminated against because of membership in any society or organization; number of apprentices is to be determined solely by the employer; employees will not be permitted to place any restriction on methods of production of the employer, who will also elect whether employees shall be paid by the piece or by the hour; employees may leave when they see fit and may be discharged when the employer sees fit - these being matters not subject to arbitration. The association advises its members to meet their employees individually or collectively and endeavor to adjust difficulties on an equitable basis. This failing, a board of arbitration is advised, the employees keeping at work pending its decision. Members not complying with these recommendations are denied the support of the association, unless the organization approves the course taken. The declaration of principles concludes as follows:

" 'This association will not countenance any conditions of wages which are not just, or which will not allow a workman of average efficiency to earn at least a fair wage.'

" 'According to a booklet issued by the association, the organization will stand for American rights and American freedom; it will provide for the interchange of information concerning the character and competency of employees and the distribution of journeymen as circumstances require. A system of registration of employees and the use of recommendation and identification cards is also to be instituted. Every effort is to be made to settle disputes amicably, but if the organization is forced into a conflict, a solid front is to be presented. The association will, in case of trouble, assist in procuring workmen and in having the members' work done. It will, through its agents in every city, be promptly advised of any proposed action detrimental to the interests of its members and be prepared for any emergency which may arise.' "

¹⁶ *The Tailor*, February, 1905, p. 8. For Lennon's view of the Protective Association, see also *The Tailor*, June, 1903, p. 16, editorial; and August, 1909, p. 11, secretary's report to the 1909 convention.

constitution that they considered antagonistic to the best interest of the merchant tailors of the country. What the matters were to which they referred they did not, however, state. An additional letter was written by myself suggesting that even these things of which they complained might in some way be adjusted or eliminated, if we could only meet and talk the matter over, but nothing came of it, as apparently the Protective Association had no desire to do business with us along the lines of either conciliation or arbitration.

The St. Paul Convention which was held over eleven years ago appointed Bro. Frederick Jensen and myself a committee to confer with the Merchant Tailors' National Exchange upon the same subject of conciliation and arbitration. We attended their convention held at Washington, D. C., submitted the matter to them, and were told by their committee that they had decided to do nothing in the matter for the reason that there were too large a number of their members who did not employ members of the J. T. U. of A. Our Union has stood from its very beginning for conciliation and arbitration of any disputes that might arise in so far as they refer to questions of wages, conditions of labor or any of those questions which are in most every case the cause of strikes and lockouts. We have been invariably turned down by the organization of the Merchant Tailors. I make this statement so that you will have the record, and that the world at large can have the record showing that it is not the trade union that refuses conciliation and arbitration. At least not in our trade, but that it is the employers' associations, and I am sure the J. T. U. of A. will be found ready in the future as in the past at any time the Merchant Tailors' organization are willing to meet with us and attempt faithfully and honestly to arrive at some kind of an agreement and understanding that will make for continued peace, and consequent continued prosperity in the merchant tailoring industry.

In February, 1906, representatives of several of the local branches of merchant tailors which had not joined the Protective Association met in New York City and re-formed the National Exchange. The Protective Association and the National Exchange continued their existence side by side until February, 1910, when they held a joint convention and united under the title, "National Association of Merchant Tailors of America."¹⁷

The report of Secretary Lennon to the 1909 convention of the Tailors indicated that up to that date no further satisfaction had been obtained in the matter of negotiating a plan of arbitration with the merchant tailors' associations. In 1911 and 1912 Secretary Brais attended the convention of the National Association of Merchant Tailors, and was given the floor to address the convention. He reported that he found a friendly spirit manifested

¹⁷ Samuel H. Spring, correspondence, October 29, 1916.

toward the Journeymen Tailors' Union, and that the new merchants' association had appointed a labor committee, which was willing to meet with a committee of the union. However, Mr. Brais reported further, the merchants' association in 1912 had local branches in only fourteen cities, although they had individual members in seventy-five cities, and it was the opinion of the president of the association that his organization would have to become more extensive before a national agreement with the union would be possible.¹⁸

In February, 1916, the National Association of Merchant Tailors included thirteen local associations¹⁹ and two hundred individual members representing one hundred and twenty-five cities in which there were no local associations.²⁰ The literature of the association indicates that it is organized to promote the interests of its members, both in a mercantile way and in connection with labor troubles, but there is no evidence of any hostility to the Journeymen Tailors' Union as such, and the secretary of the Merchants' Association states that its members have had "very little real serious trouble, nothing general,"²¹ with their employees.

2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The collective agreement in the tailoring industry is primarily a list of piece rates, and is universally known as a "bill of prices." However, the agreement may, and generally does, contain provisions covering matters other than wages. These additional provisions will be discussed in their proper places. At this point it is desired to call attention only to a clause in the model agreement approved by the Tailors' Union.²² This clause

¹⁸ *The Tailor*, March, 1911, p. 22; E. J. Brais, correspondence, March 2, 1912.

¹⁹ Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Erie, New York City, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, Toledo, Washington.

²⁰ *Official Record of the Seventh Annual Convention of the National Association of Merchant Tailors of America*, St. Louis, Missouri, February 8-10, 1916.

²¹ Samuel H. Spring, correspondence, October 29, 1916.

²² In 1905 a model agreement was drawn up by a committee of the Tailors' Union and approved by a referendum vote. This model agreement contains all of the usual items, but the prices are left blank to be filled in by agreement between the union and the employers in each city. *The Tailor*, August, 1905, pp. 1-4.

provides that the agreement shall be self-renewing, unless one of the parties desires a change.²³ This provision is of more importance than appears at first sight. It was found by the Tailors that the mere presentation of a bill for renewal was frequently irritating to the employers, and if the latter happened to be in an "open-shop" frame of mind, the request for renewal might be made the occasion for a break with the union. There is little doubt that the self-renewing feature of the agreement has considerably reduced the friction between employers and employees.

3. ECONOMIC DEMANDS AND POLICIES OF THE UNION

(a) *Recognition of the Union*

The demand for recognition of the union is essentially equivalent to a demand that the employer shall recognize and employ the system of collective bargaining for determining the terms and conditions of employment. "Recognition of the union" implies that the employer will meet the representatives of the union, whether his own employees or not, and deal with them as the authorized representatives of his employees. As in most industries, the union has been obliged on a number of occasions to fight for this kind of recognition. Particularly during the period of ascendancy of the Merchant Tailors' National Protective Association, there were frequent attempts on the part of employers to oblige their employees to bargain as individuals. Sometimes the expiration of a former agreement and the presentation of a new scale of prices by the employees was made the occasion for the break by the employers. The unions have invariably refused to abandon the principle of collective bargaining, and in most cases the employers have given up their demands and made a settlement with the union committees, although sometimes long

²³ "It is hereby agreed by and between the parties hereto that the above bill of prices and conditions shall be in full force and effect from and after . . . for one year, and shall continue indefinitely provided, however, that at least thirty days prior to each year's termination and every year thereafter, if either party wishes to change any provision of this bill of prices and agreement, they shall notify the other party, in writing, to that effect, specifying the change or changes desired, whereupon a meeting shall be arranged between the parties hereto, to make a new agreement, if possible." Model Agreement, Journeymen Tailors' Union of America, *The Tailor*, loc. cit.

and expensive strikes were necessary before this result was secured.²⁴

During the years when the "open-shop" agitation by employers in all industries was most vigorous, it frequently happened in the tailoring trade that an employer who had been accustomed to doing business with the union announced that henceforward he was going to run an "open shop." Such an announcement generally created considerable excitement in the local union, and letters were dispatched to headquarters asking permission to call a strike to compel "recognition of the union" by the employer. In such cases Secretary Lennon was accustomed to advise the locals that it made no difference what the employer called his shop, as long as the people working there were members of the union, and that the most substantial recognition that a union could receive was the payment of the scale of prices previously agreed upon. The locals were therefore advised to take no action until the employer undertook to introduce non-union people or until he refused to pay the scale. By this policy there is no doubt that many useless strikes were avoided, as in many cases the employers were glad to let well enough alone.²⁵

²⁴ For accounts of strikes of this kind cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125, New York strike of 1894; p. 126, strikes in Kansas City, Denver, Binghamton, N.Y., Milwaukee, and Cleveland, 1903-1904; p. 127, lockout in Los Angeles, Cal. The following communication of the employers to the tailors in Kansas City in 1903 is an interesting sample of an employers' "ultimatum:"

"Believing it to be our mutual interest, the undersigned merchant tailors have resolved that in the future we will treat with our men as individuals only, and employ same as long as they meet our requirements. It is not our motive to reduce wages; on the contrary, we will pay more for the highest class of workmanship, thereby making it an incentive to excel; we decline to pay as much for poor work as the first-class men are justly entitled to. We also reserve the right to judge the class to which it belongs, and to place the jouts in their respective grades. We decline to furnish back shops, as past experience has proven them to be a detriment to the craft, instead of a help. We will not put any restrictions on our men as to helpers, as we deem it very essential to the trade that we have apprentices." *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 24.

²⁵ Cf. *The Tailor*, October, 1902, p. 12, and April, 1907, p. 15, editorials by Secretary Lennon.

(b) *The Union Shop*

For purposes of this discussion a terminology is employed which is coming into use among students of the labor question, and which endeavors to avoid the confusion and ambiguity which has frequently attended the use of the terms, "open shop" and "closed shop." Under this terminology two kinds of shops are recognized, the "union shop" and the "non-union shop." The union shop is said to exist in an establishment where wages and conditions of employment for all employees are determined by agreement between the union and the employer. The non-union shop is said to exist in an establishment in which wages and conditions are determined by the employer without consulting the union. The above definitions being given, union shops are subdivided into "closed union shops" and "open union shops," and non-union shops are subdivided into "closed non-union shops" and "open non-union shops." The "closed union shop" is held to exist in establishments where, as a matter of agreement between the employer and the union, none but union members can obtain or retain employment. This represents the ideal from the trade union standpoint. The "closed non-union shop" is held to exist in establishments where, by reason of the attitude or policy of the employer, no union member can obtain or retain employment. This represents the ideal from the standpoint of employers who are opposed to unionism. Between the two extremes are the "open union shop" and the "open non-union shop." In the "open union shop" wages and conditions of labor are regulated by agreement with the union, but non-unionists are at liberty to secure employment, and to retain it, so far as anything in the agreement is concerned. In the "open non-union shop" wages and conditions are regulated by the employer without consulting the union, but the union members are at liberty to secure and retain employment, so far as anything in the policy of the employer is concerned.

It is obvious from the above discussion that the force which prevents the non-unionists from working in a closed union shop is the strength of the union, manifested by its ability to secure a closed shop clause in the agreement, and to enforce the same; while the force that prevents the unionist from working in a

closed non-union shop is the power of hiring and discharge on the part of the employer.

Shops of all four kinds are found in the custom tailoring trade, but a majority are union shops, open or closed, and open non-union shops. Only a few shops have come to the writer's attention where unionists are excluded altogether by action of the employer, although there are some shops where they are excluded by action of the union.²⁶ The tailors, like other unions, have been obliged to face an "open shop" movement on the part of the employers. As already explained,²⁷ where this movement consisted simply of talk, the executive officers of the union have advised that it be overlooked altogether. Where, however, the employers have carried the matter to the point of a lockout or a refusal altogether to deal with the union, the Tailors, as already noted,²⁸ have resisted vigorously and have become involved in some serious conflicts.

The danger of trouble with the employers over the union shop question has been met in part by a diplomatic attitude on the part of the unions. They have recognized that a demand upon an employer to sign a closed shop agreement is generally irritating, and they have not always insisted upon a closed shop clause in their agreements.²⁹ The Tailors have relied upon the strength of the organization rather than upon the written agreement to get everybody in the shop into the union. The principle has been repeatedly laid down by their officers, that a weak union cannot enforce a closed shop, even with a written agreement, but a strong union can enforce a closed shop without a written agreement. It is true that many of the Tailors' agreements specify that only union men shall be employed, and wherever the employer desires the use of the label, this condition is always understood, either expressly or tacitly. But where the employer for any reason objects to a closed shop clause in the agreement,

²⁶ In both cases the exclusion of unionists is usually the result of a strike or lockout which has been lost by the union, and which has left considerable bitterness of feeling on both sides.

²⁷ *Supra*, p. 21.

²⁸ *Supra*, p. 20.

²⁹ The model agreement approved by the Tailors' Union says nothing whatever about the employment of union men only.

the national officers of the Tailors' Union have ordinarily advised the local union to accept the agreement without this clause, provided all other terms were satisfactory. And where a strike has been in progress, in which the closed shop agreement was one of the demands, if a settlement of all other demands could be secured, the local union has been advised to waive the closed shop demand.

The aim has been in all cases to get the non-unionists into the union with the least possible friction with the employer, and the strike against the non-unionist has been employed only as a last resort. When, however, it became evident that one or more non-unionists who had obtained work in a shop hitherto solidly union were not going to join voluntarily, there has been no hesitation on the part of the national officers in supporting the local union in striking, if necessary, for the purpose of getting the non-unionists either into the union, or out of the shop. It was formerly the custom in such cases to demand from the employer the discharge of the offending employees, unless they joined the union, but after such action had been construed by some of the courts as conspiracy, the union found it necessary to confine itself to notifying the employer that the unionists did not care to work with the men in question. This, of course, left him his choice between the union men and the non-union men, and if orders were coming in rapidly the employer ordinarily induced the non-unionists to join, and in some cases even went so far as to pay their initiation fees. The knowledge of the fact that the union was prepared to strike if necessary has often been sufficient to bring the non-unionists in without further trouble.

In this connection it should be observed that the regulations of the Tailors' Union on the subject of the union shop affect mainly journeymen tailors capable of working for the best stores, employing the old system of production, because it is in this class of stores in the main that the union has maintained its influence.

An investigation made in 1911 showed that in 65 cities reporting,³⁰ there were 1,239 merchant tailoring establishments of the

³⁰ Replies to the questionnaire were received from 73 cities, but only 65 covered both the item of union shops and the item of union membership. The eight cities not reporting on both of these items were New York, Chi-

kind organized by the Tailors' Union, and of these 378, or 30.5 per cent, were union shops. In the same cities it was reported that there were 6,074 tailors eligible to membership, and of these 2,640, or 43.5 per cent, were union members. The fact that the percentage of union members is larger than the percentage of union shops is probably to be explained on the ground that the union has organized more large shops than small ones. A number of small shops, where the proprietor employs no journeymen, and is not himself a union member, are not organized at all. It is evident from these figures that in the cities reporting the union controlled less than half of the tailors, and somewhat less than one-third of the shops; but from various sources the writer is informed that, if the finest stores and the most skilled journeymen are considered, the percentage, both of journeymen tailors and of shops, controlled by the union is considerably higher.³¹ The percentage in both respects is also higher in small cities than in large ones. In thirty cities of less than 25,000 population, it was reported in 1911 that there were 627 tailors eligible to membership, of whom 530, or 84 per cent, were in the unions; and in the same cities it was reported that there were 150 mer-

cago, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Paul, Troy, Peoria, and Manitowoc. For the returns in detail, *cf.* Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-143, 147. For explanation of method and probable accuracy of the investigation, *cf. ibid.*, pp. 132-134, 145.

³¹ A pamphlet published by the American Federation of Labor in 1911, entitled, "Manufacturers Using Labels of Unions affiliated with the Union Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor," gives a list of 693 establishments in the United States and Canada entitled to use the Journeymen Tailors' label, and actually using it. In the 72 cities covered by the writers' investigations, his figures indicate 546 union shops, while in the same cities, the A. F. of L. pamphlet indicates 276 label establishments. The terms "union shop" and "label establishment" are nearly coextensive, but not quite; all label establishments must be union shops, but not all union shops actually use the label, as customers and employers sometimes object to its use. The A. F. of L. pamphlet does not indicate the methods employed for assembling the information therein contained, but it seems probable that it is based upon incomplete returns from the cities considered.

To those familiar with the relative quality of the stores in any locality, the A. F. of L. pamphlet will be found useful for examining the conclusion, that the best stores are more thoroughly organized by the Tailors' Union than those of a lower grade.

chant tailoring establishments, of which 118, or 79 per cent, were union shops. In twelve cities of more than 100,000 population,³² it was reported that there were 4,459 tailors eligible to membership, of whom 1,372, or 31 per cent, were in the unions; and in the same cities it was reported that there were 901 merchant tailoring establishments, of which 138, or 15 per cent, were union shops. To explain fully the differences in these respects between large and small cities would require a more complete knowledge of the conditions in each city than that which is at present available. In general, however, the difficulty of effective organization in the large cities is explained: (a) by the greater territory to be covered; (b) by the large number of immigrant tailors, who either are not familiar with conservative trade union methods or are not in sympathy with them; (c) by the fact that many of the skilled tailors in the large cities are virtually contractors, employing a number of helpers; these tailors were kept out of the union by the one helper rule, when this rule was in force, and furthermore, being more than half employers, they lack the unity of interest necessary to the formation of a successful union. Some of the local conditions that account for the low per cent of organization in certain specific cities are: (a) the drift of the trade to fashion centers, such as New York and Boston; (b) the effect of unfortunate strikes; (c) the neglect of the union in some cities to pay attention to any but the best stores.

Concluding the discussion of the shop question, it should be noted that among journeymen tailors the regulations of the union are familiar; these tailors do not as a rule expect to get work in a union shop unless they keep up their union membership, and if they have fallen out of benefit, or have never been members, they generally square themselves with the union without trouble. The duty of keeping watch over the interests of the union in this respect devolves upon a member in each shop known as the shop steward, who collects the dues and sees that new tailors are brought into the union. The terms of the union are not onerous; the initiation fee is low,³³ there is practically no

³² Boston, Cleveland, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Portland, Atlanta, Winnipeg, Lowell.

³³ \$2.00, unless the candidate was formerly a member, in which case he must pay \$6.00.

discrimination (with the exception of some unions that bar negro tailors) except for offenses against the union, and the newcomer is allowed to go to work in the shop and if necessary to wait until he gets his first wages before he is obliged to pay his initiation fee and his first month's dues. The Tailors' Union has had, therefore, comparatively little difficulty in maintaining the union shop principle, where once established, except in those cases where the employers have broken with the union and deliberately endeavored to fill their shops with non-union men.

(c) Wages

The wage agreement or price bill. The employees of tailor shops include both piece and time workers. An investigation made in 1911 showed that of 5,084 union members in 69 cities (representing 41 per cent of the total membership and 22 per cent of all local unions) 3,970 were employed on the piece system, and 1,114 on the weekly system.³⁴ Of the employees working on the weekly system, a majority are bushelmen. The balance are employed chiefly in shops which have adopted the weekly system for all employees; although some are in shops where the piece system is retained for the skilled journeymen, but one or more pressers or finishers are employed by the week. In a majority of shops, therefore, the wage agreements contain (1) piece scales, (2) time scales.

(1) Piece scales. The Tailors belong in that group of unions which "work under scales which attempt to cover, by descriptive enumeration, every type or pattern for which a distinct rate is to be paid."³⁵ It is not proposed to discuss all of the technicalities of tailors' bills of prices.³⁶ There are three matters, however, that require particular attention: (a) classification of materials, (b) classification of firms, (c) payment of helpers.

(a) Classification of materials. There are two reasons for

³⁴ Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-155, 157.

³⁵ D. A. McCabe, *The Standard Rate in American Trade Unions*, p. 35. McCabe includes in this group, besides the Tailors, the Glass Bottle Blowers, the Flint Glass Workers, the Operative Potters, the shirt and overall workers in the United Garment Workers, and the stove molders in the Molders' Union.

³⁶ The reader who is interested can obtain a good idea of a tailors' bill of prices from the model agreement and the report of the committee who recommended the same. Cf. *The Tailor*, August, 1905, pp. 1-4.

the classification of materials for purposes of determining piece rates; first, the fact that some materials enter into the more expensive suits, while others enter into the cheaper suits; and second, the fact that some materials are harder for the tailor to work on than others. The model agreement of the Tailors' Union contains two classes of materials, as follows:

First class goods: Basket, beaver, birdseye, chinchilla, cravenett, covert cloth, crepe, corkscrew, diagonals, drap-to-ete, doeskin, elysians, fancy vestings, frieze, kersey, melton, montagnac pique, pilot, petershams, ribs, silk, stockinetts, tricot, unfinished worsteds, velvet, venetians, vicuna, worsted, whip cord.

Second class goods: Alpaca, cassimere, cheviot, corduroy, duck, flannel, jeans, linen, marseilles, mohair, seersucker, serge, tweed, thibit, velveteen, wool crash, wash vestings.

The goods listed in the first class are those which are ordinarily used for the higher priced garments; they are also of a relatively compact and hard texture, making them harder to sew and press. The goods in the second class are of a softer and looser texture, and enter into the moderate priced garments.³⁷ The model agreement is not compulsory, and some local unions have only one class of materials in their bills, but where they have the two classes, the piece rate is higher for the first class than for the second. The model agreement does not contemplate the setting of two prices for every kind of garment. There are some garments which are intended to be listed as first class, regardless of material; for example, dress coats, vests and trousers, Tuxedos, frock coats, new market overcoats and surtouts.

(b) Classification of firms. In cities of moderate size the same bill of prices is usually paid in all of the establishments controlled by the union. But in large cities, where there are classes of stores, some handling high priced garments only, while

³⁷ The classification of goods is not a new thing in the tailoring trade. Cf. the following extract from the speech for the defense in a trial of tailors for conspiracy in Philadelphia in 1827:

"Distinctions of various kinds had been attempted between thick and thin clothing. . . . To put an end to such altercations a specification of prices was determined on, and such a printed document prepared as would effectually preclude any further ambiguity." *The Trial of Twenty-four Journeymen Tailors, charged with a conspiracy*. Philadelphia, 1827. Reprinted in *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, IV, 142-143.

others handle the moderate priced and lower priced garments, the union has not found it possible to secure the same piece rates in all the stores, and has accepted a lower bill in some stores than in others. For example, in New York City the various bills paid can be grouped into about four classes, the differences in piece rates being roughly proportionate to the differences in the prices of the garments sold by each class of stores. It has been claimed on behalf of the tailors that they recognized more thoroughly than any other craft the principle that the employer should not be asked to pay the same wage to workmen of different grades of ability, and employed on different grades of work.³⁸ Nevertheless it has been difficult to adjust the bills in different stores in a way satisfactory to the merchant tailors, the complaint being that journeymen worked on a given grade of clothing for one firm at one rate and on the same grade of clothing for another firm at a lower rate. The most satisfactory results have been secured in those cities where it was possible to make the bill uniform in all the union stores.

(c) Payment of helpers. Where a journeyman tailor works with help, the helper is paid by the journeyman, and not by the employer. The usual rule is that the helper gets one-third of the price of the job, and the tailor two-thirds. On this system it is obvious that the helper will share in any increase in piece wages secured by the journeyman. However, in order to give

38 "Our unions are severely criticized for maintaining a minimum bill of prices, the merchant tailors harping, a few of them at any rate, on the old worn-out statement that all men are not equally capable and are therefore not entitled to the same compensation. We have never denied this claim, and do not deny it. We fix a minimum scale to cover the average journeyman, and if there are men of special expertness the merchant tailor has always been at liberty to pay as much more than the scale as he pleases, and not only is this true, but as is the case in no other industry we present different price bills to different establishments. The store requiring the finest work and the finest workmen is asked to pay the highest bill, and those requiring less skill, we do not require them to pay the same scale. This gives the merchant tailor an opportunity to employ that class of mechanics that are needed to turn out his trade. I know of no other craft in which this principle is so thoroughly recognized as in that of the tailors." *The Tailor*, October, 1903, p. 16, editorial on "The Trade Union and Business Stability."

official endorsement to this principle, a constitutional amendment was submitted and passed in 1907, as follows:³⁹

In all cases where helpers are employed the helpers shall participate in all increase of wages, reduction of the hours of labor, etc., in the same proportion as the journeyman tailor that employs them.

(2) Weekly scales. We consider (a) weekly scales in shops where both piece workers and weekly workers are employed; (b) weekly scales in shops employing the weekly system exclusively. The model agreement, which is drafted for case (a), contains the following provisions which are of importance in this connection:

All extras not mentioned in this bill shall be paid for at the rate of not less than cents per hour.

Bushelling by the hour shall not be less than cents.

Bushelmen's wages shall not be less than dollars a week; working day shall not be more than ten hours.

But the model agreement provides for exclusive weekly agreements if the local unions desire:

The adoption of this piece price bill shall not be construed as prohibiting any Local Union from making an agreement to make all work by the week in accord with our constitution.

There are a few localities where a large part of the work is made on the weekly system. For example, in 1911 it was found that about one-half of the members of the Seattle union, and about forty per cent of the members of the San Francisco union, were working by the week. The present union scale for weekly workers in Seattle is as follows:⁴⁰

<i>Coats</i>		Per Week
Tailors		\$25.00
Operators		25.00
Operator's assistant.....		18.00
Pressers		25.00
Presser's assistant.....		18.00
Buttonhole maker.....		18.00
First-class finisher.....		16.00
Second-class finisher.....		14.00
Try-on maker		18.00

³⁹ *The Tailor*, September, 1907, p. 16, Proposition No. 1.

⁴⁰ *The Tailor*, April 10, 1917, p. 3. Other details of the union agreement for weekly workers in Seattle, and a description of the diverse methods of producing clothing in that city, may be found in the same issue.

Vests

Operator	22.00
Operator's assistant.....	16.00
Presser	22.00
Presser's assistant.....	18.00
Buttonhole maker	16.00
Finisher	12.00

Trousers

Operator	22.00
Operator's assistant.....	16.00
Presser	22.00
Presser's assistant.....	18.00
First-class finisher.....	14.00
Second-class finisher.....	12.00

Bushelmen

Bushelman	25.00
Bushelman's assistant.....	22.00

A curious combination of the time and piece systems of payment is found in the "time logs" which are in use in some localities in Canada. In a time log each piece is standardized at so many hours, the hourly rate being constant.

Wage policy of union. (a) Reductions. It has been the uniform policy of the Tailors' Union to resist reductions whenever offered. There has been no deviation from this policy except in times of extreme industrial depression. In resisting reductions the union has met with a high degree of success, and it has been found necessary to accept few reductions, except during panic times.

(b) Increases. Considerable discretion has been exercised by the Tailors' Executive Board in the matter of supporting demands for increased wages. It has been their rule for a number of years to require from local unions desiring to raise their price bills a copy of the bill already paid, as well as a copy of the bill which it is desired to present to the employers, so that the board can see directly the amount of the increase demanded. The board has never placed obstacles in the way of any local union's obtaining as large an increase as possible by peaceable negotiations, but when it has been evident that a strike would be necessary, the board has usually required that the local union should not demand more than a ten per cent increase; and the locals have been strongly urged to accept a compromise of less

than this amount, rather than to strike. Care has also been taken to present bills at the beginning of the good seasons, when the employers are rushed with orders and can least afford a strike. These policies have been followed quite consistently, with the result that a very large part of the demands made by the local unions have been settled on a satisfactory basis without strikes. Where strikes have been necessary, a large per cent have succeeded, and, as a rule, the gains made have been permanent.

Results of wage policy. With reference to the actual accomplishments of the Tailors' Union in the matter of wages, there are several questions which naturally arise:

(1) What are the average yearly earnings of tailors at the present time: (a) of coatmakers, (b) of vestmakers, (c) of trousersmakers, (d) of bushelmen or other journeymen employed by the week, (e) of helpers?

(2) What has been the per cent of increase or decrease in tailor's piece rates over any given period of years?

(3) Have the annual earnings of tailors changed in the same proportion as their piece wages?

(4) To what extent have increases been due to the activities of tailors' unions, and to what extent to other causes?

(5) Have increases in wages kept pace with the increase in the prices of commodities ordinarily consumed by workmen of the same general standard of living as the tailors?

(6) Have the wages of tailors kept pace with those of other workmen of the same general preparation and skill?

It is obvious that all of the above questions may be applied to specified localities or districts, or to the country as a whole. The extraordinary diversity of the conditions ⁴¹ under which the

⁴¹ In addition to the differences in skill and speed of work, which affect the wages of piece workers in all trades, it must be noted that some tailors are working in free shops, some in rented shops and some at home; some on expensive clothing and some on cheap clothing, and of these, some receiving the same piece wages, regardless of the price of the garment, while others receive a classified scale, the basis of classification, moreover, not being uniform; the specifications for each garment are subject to a great many minor variations, or "extras," for which payment differs in different localities; the establishments are in all stages of "industrial evolution;" some tailors are working in union towns, and some in non-union; the predominating nationalities, and corresponding standards of living, vary greatly as between different localities; some tailors work with help, and some without,

tailors of North America are working renders impossible any answer to the above questions which can be supported by statistical data at hand. All that can be done is to present the writer's impressions, secured from various sources,⁴² and advanced with the utmost reservation as to their probable accuracy.

Upon the first topic, yearly earnings of tailors, the different crafts stand usually in the following order as to the amount of their yearly earnings: bushelmen, coatmakers, trousersmakers, vestmakers, helpers. Only a few tailors of any craft earn more than \$1000 a year, while it is not probable that many helpers, unless they purposely lose time, earn less than \$200 a year. The average wages of bushelmen the country over are probably about \$800 a year. The average annual wages of coatmakers, vestmakers and trousersmakers, considered as a group, lie probably between \$600 and \$800. Coatmakers may average \$750, trousersmakers \$700, and vestmakers \$600. Helpers average probably \$350.

On the second question, increase or decrease of piece rates, it may be said with certainty that only a few local unions have been obliged to accept permanent reductions since they entered the national union, and that practically all local unions have increased their piece rates. The increases have usually taken place at intervals of from two to five years for any given union, and have averaged probably five per cent each time. It is believed that this statement will apply to a majority of the local unions. A more general or exact statement is impossible. In 1883, when the present national union was organized, it is probable that many local unions existing prior to that date had not yet recovered from the demoralizing effects of the panic of 1873.

and where they work with help, the number of helpers varies, and the situation is further complicated by the fact that in many cases the helpers are members of the tailors' own families; employment is seasonal and exceedingly irregular, and the hours of labor completely without standardization, except in a few establishments employing the weekly system, and in a few cities where the local unions have undertaken to limit the hours of piece workers.

⁴² The writer's impressions are based upon data in reports of state bureaus of labor; upon returns received from a questionnaire sent out in 1911 to secretaries of local unions; upon the observation of union officers, and upon his own observation while employed in the general headquarters of the Journeymen Tailors' Union.

At any rate, it is known that a great many local unions, on joining the national, secured very shortly an increase in their price bills, and increased them further from time to time as indicated. An effort was made in 1911 to secure exact data on this point, but the returns were not sufficiently definite or comprehensive to be of value.

To answer the third question, it would be necessary to know whether there has been a change in the average number of pieces that a skilled tailor, working by the piece on the old system, gets each year. This question in turn requires a knowledge of the amount of work available and of the number of skilled tailors. As for the amount of work available for "old-line" tailors, there is no doubt in the writer's mind that it has decreased during the life of the present national union, on account of the competition of cheaper methods of producing clothing. As for the number of skilled tailors, it is less easy to trace changes in this respect. As we shall see in another connection,⁴³ it is generally admitted that the number of tailors capable of doing the highest grade of work on the individual system has declined, and it is possible that it has declined sufficiently to give each tailor of this grade now employed as many pieces as he would have obtained, say, thirty years ago. However, if all journeymen tailors are considered, it is the writer's opinion that their number has not declined in the same proportion as the work to be done (i. e., the work to be done on the old individual system), and that upon the whole the average number of pieces to each journeyman is less than it was thirty years ago. If this is true, the average annual earnings of journeymen tailors have not increased in the same proportion as their piece rates.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Infra*, pp. 78-81.

⁴⁴ If only native tailors were to be considered, the number would probably be adjusted so that each would get about the same number of pieces from year to year. The effect of a reduction in the amount of work to be done in a union shop is first to give a less number of pieces each season to each of the permanent employees, inasmuch as they work under a turn-list; but after a time some retire and are not replaced, and the average number of pieces which the others get tends to be the same as before. The training of apprentices being under the control of the journeymen, the number of apprentices will probably be adjusted to the same end. But there is a "floating element" of tailors, consisting largely of immigrants who have learned their trade abroad, who obtain employment during the rush seasons,

The fourth question would be difficult to answer, even with comprehensive wage data, and no attempt is made to answer it here. The fifth question obviously involves the first three; the opinion is expressed, that even without considering the recent period of abnormally high prices, the increase in tailors' wages has fallen a little short of the increase in the prices of commodities ordinarily consumed by tailors and their families. Finally, it is believed that the wages of tailors are about equal to those of the least prosperous of the skilled building trades, and somewhat short of the wages of the printing trades and of the better paid building trades.

(d) *Hours of Labor*

One of the most difficult of all reforms attempted by the Tailors' Union has been the regulation of the hours of labor. The fundamental obstacle to regulating hours has been the seasonal character of the trade. At certain seasons of the year, notably the spring and fall, orders for custom clothing are numerous, and in most cases the customer is in a hurry to get his individual order completed. At other seasons trade is so slack that the tailor may get only one or two garments to make during an entire month. These extremes of employment have existed in the tailoring trade from the earliest times,⁴⁵ and have

and tend to cut down the average yearly number of pieces received by each journeyman; and this element, originating at a distance from the demand, is not adjusted like the local supply of labor.

⁴⁵ *The London Tradesman*, writing of the journeymen tailors of London in the year 1747, says: "They are as numerous as locusts, are out of business about three or four months in the year, and are generally as poor as rats." Galton, *The Tailoring Trade*, p. 3, footnote. And in *The Pioneer*, May 10, 1834, in the course of "The address of the journeymen tailors of the metropolis," appears the following:

"The men working at home are scarcely ever able to earn more than 3 shillings 6 pence or 4 shillings per day, with the assistance often of their wives and children, and then, as I have before stated, only when they can get work to do. Even these men, working in this manner at this great reduction, are very frequently days, nay, months, without employment, and consequently without pay. If, however, an order comes in to be executed immediately, the journeyman must labor night and day to accommodate the customer and master, and make every sacrifice of health, and the only remaining domestic comfort on such occasions, or risk the chance of being discharged from his shop altogether. In the spring he is repeatedly called upon to make these sacrifices; but all the other parts of the year he is never certain of one

made the standardization of hours appear to be almost hopeless. Nevertheless the organized tailors have not at any time abandoned altogether the effort to improve conditions in this respect, and it is to this effort, however unsuccessful, that our attention must now be directed.

The earliest official action by the Journeymen Tailors' Union seems to have been taken by the 1884 convention, which declared: "We believe that a permanent improvement of the condition of the wage-working class cannot be effected by any means whatever, unless accompanied by a reduction in the hours of labor."⁴⁶ This resolution was reiterated by the 1885 and 1887 conventions.⁴⁷ The 1889 and 1891 conventions passed resolutions favorable to reducing hours, and approved the movement of the American Federation of Labor for an eight-hour day in all trades.⁴⁸ The 1893 convention condemned the long hours in the trade, and called upon every member to "do all in his power to discourage the practice of working long hours, and wherever it is possible to strive to introduce a ten-hour day."⁴⁹ The 1897 committee on laws and audit proposed, and it was approved by the members, that after April 1, 1899, members employed in free workshops should observe a maximum working day of ten hours. A fine of one dollar was provided for each violation.⁵⁰ In support of this amendment it was argued that reduction of the hours of labor was necessary on grounds of humanity; that it would increase wages; and that it would lengthen the seasons, putting a stop to "crowding into eight or ten weeks the work that should be spread over four or five months."⁵¹

week's constant employment." Reprinted from Galton, in *The Tailor*, February, 1904, p. 6.

⁴⁶ *Constitution*, 1884, p. 13, Resolution No. 2.

⁴⁷ *Constitution*, 1885, p. 4, Resolution No. 2; 1887, p. 19, Resolution No. 2.

⁴⁸ Proceedings, *The Tailor*, September, 1889, and August, 1891.

⁴⁹ As early as 1889 some of the local unions were trying to enforce the ten-hour day. *The Tailor*, September, 1889, p. 1, col. 4, report of general secretary on "Less hours of labor."

⁵⁰ *The Tailor*, August, 1897, p. 16, Proposition No. 5. In printing the new constitution the Executive Board assumed that the proposition as passed prohibited Sunday work, although the language used was: "Ten hours per day shall be the maximum that any member of the J. T. U. of A. shall work during any one calendar week day." For amendment as finally printed, see *Constitution*, 1898, Sec. 21.

⁵¹ *The Tailor*, September, 1897, p. 1.

The section setting ten hours as the maximum work day in free shops was modified in 1899 to read: "Ten hours per day or sixty hours per week,"⁵² the intention being apparently to allow the members to choose their own day of rest, although it was open also to the construction, that overtime would be allowed on some days, if made up by working less on others. That the latter construction was not intended appears from an amendment passed in 1901, making the section read:⁵³

Ten hours per day shall be the maximum that any member of the J. T. U. of A. shall be allowed to work during any one day.

The section remained in this shape until 1905, when the mandatory feature was removed altogether, and the limitation of hours was made entirely optional with the local unions.⁵⁴ No further change was made until the 1914 constitution, when all reference to hours on piece work was dropped, and the following substituted, which is the rule now (January 1, 1917):⁵⁵

All local unions of the J. T. U. of A. must have a provision in their agreement limiting the hours of labor to not more than eight hours, for day and week work, with extra pay for overtime, and no new agreements shall be sanctioned by the J. T. U. of A. without such provisions.

The number of unions enforcing the limitation of hours of piece workers was reported on three dates, August, 1899, March, 1900, and January, 1912. On the first date 29 local unions out of a total of 151 were enforcing the ten-hour work day,⁵⁶ and on the second date, 25 local unions out of a total of 186.⁵⁷ On the third date, 73 local unions out of 308 reported, and of these, only ten were limiting the hours of piece workers.⁵⁸ In this

⁵² *The Tailor*, August, 1899, p. 16, Proposition No. 3. *Constitution*, 1900, Sec. 21.

⁵³ *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 19, Proposition No. 4. *Constitution*, 1902, Sec. 21; 1904, Sec. 22.

⁵⁴ "The J. T. U. of A. shall endeavor by all means in their power to reduce the hours of labor, and such local unions as shall by a two-thirds majority decide to limit the hours of labor shall be supported in such action by the J. T. U. of A." *Constitution*, 1905, Sec. 22; 1908, Sec. 21; 1910, Sec. 21.

⁵⁵ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 11. This rule does not mean that everybody must work by the day or week, but means that where tailors are employed by the day or week, the agreement must provide for an eight-hour day.

⁵⁶ General secretary's report to 1899 committee. *The Tailor*, August, 1899, p. 7.

⁵⁷ *The Tailor*, March, 1900, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

connection it should be noted that most of the tailors' unions have succeeded in limiting the hours of weekly workers and bushelmen, but that the effort to regulate the hours of piece workers has been an almost complete failure, except in a very few localities. The pressure upon the tailors to make up in the rush seasons for the loss of time in the dull seasons is so great that the limitation of hours is practically impossible.

(e) *Workshops, and the Piece System*

Two systems may be distinguished in the tailoring trade, with reference to the place where the tailor does his work: I. The itinerant system; II. The shop system.

I. The itinerant system. On this system the journeyman tailor works in the customer's home, on goods furnished by the customer.

II. The shop system. This system is subdivided as follows:

1. Employer's shop system; journeyman works in a shop furnished by the employer, either free of charge, or with a charge for "seat-room."⁵⁹

2. Private shop system: journeyman owns or rents shop, or pays for "seat-room" to some other journeyman, or to an association of journeymen who combine to secure working quarters.

3. Home work system: journeyman works in his own home.

In all variations of the shop system, the journeyman works on goods furnished by the employer, and the garment has been cut out by the employer or cutter before the journeyman receives it. When tailors work in private shops or at home, they furnish their own tools and machines, and in many cases where they work in employers' shops, they supply their own sewing machines, press blocks and press stands.

The information necessary for writing a complete history of working systems in the tailoring trade is not at hand, but from scattered sources it appears evident that historically the itinerant system was the first in this country, and that the shop system was in the first instance the result of itinerant tailors' starting shops of their own, and assuming the functions of merchants as well as of journeymen. The itinerant system and the shop systems

⁵⁹ A variation on this system is the contractor's shop, furnished by a contractor who is a middleman between the merchant and the journeyman.

appear to have continued side by side for a number of years, until gradually the itinerant system became obsolete.⁶⁰ The home work system, while undoubtedly it prevailed in England during the early part of the 19th century,⁶¹ and was probably used as early in this country by women engaged on finishing work, appears to have reached its greatest development in the United States following the introduction of the sewing machine. Home work on the part of men tailors in this country seems to have arisen mainly from two conditions: (1) the journeymen could make a larger number of pieces if they were assisted at home by their wives and daughters; (2) by working at home they could work for more than one store, and in that way get more work to do, especially in the dull seasons. The contract system, or "sweating system," as it is called in the trade, lends itself peculiarly to home work. The contractor takes the work in lots from the merchant tailors, and undertakes to get it made anywhere he can, and frequently this means that it is done in the tailors' homes. This system had grown up in all large cities by the time the present national union was organized, and as a result home work was prevalent in those cities. It was not, however, confined to the contract system, but was frequently employed by establishments which gave out their work directly to the journeymen.

Although, for the reasons suggested, many journeymen believed it to be to their interest to work at home, the practice of home work was early recognized as contrary to union ideals, and for twenty years following the foundation of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America, the question of abolishing this practice, and of obliging the employers to furnish free shops to the tailors, was regarded by the union officers as the foremost question confronting the trade.⁶² It was hoped by this reform to

⁶⁰ The tailors did not cease to travel, but sought work from established shops rather than from customers in their homes. Cf. article on "Shop-board Traditions," *The Tailor*, June, 1892, p. 2.

⁶¹ "There has been a large portion of the trade, for various reasons, under different circumstances, compelled to work at their homes, if so they may be called - etc." From *The Pioneer*, May 10, 1834. Reprinted in Galton, *The Tailoring Trade*, p. 192; also in *The Tailor*, February, 1904, p. 6.

⁶² It is not possible with data now at hand to trace the beginning of this reform in the custom tailoring trade in America. The writer is in-

reduce hours, to regulate the distribution of work and to standardize the general conditions of employment, in a much more effective way than could be done while the system of working at home prevailed. The arguments against home work⁶³ and in favor of free shops were as follows:

(1) Making clothing at home, particularly in the tenements, is dangerous to the public health, on account of the possibility of disease and infection.

(2) The tailors should not be subjected to the inconvenience, discomfort and expense of turning their homes into workshops, when other trades have shops furnished by the employers.

(3) Working at home makes it difficult, if not impossible, to regulate hours of labor or the distribution of work, and puts men into competition to get the work away from one another. Men will work all night if necessary to finish a rush job or to get more than their share of the work. "This just cause of complaint would be remedied by the adoption of the back-shop system, for the cutters would not give one man all the work when the men were all together, nor would the tailors in the face of their fellows take it."⁶⁴

formed by former Secretary Lennon that in 1883, when the present union was organized, free shops were already the rule in small cities, but there is no complete information to indicate whether the free shop system had existed since pioneer days, or whether it had been won by the activity of tailors' unions. The proceedings and constitutions of national tailors' unions between 1865 and 1875, in so far as these documents have come into the writer's hands (*Cf. Bibliography*) contain only a few references to the shop question, but these tend to indicate that the shop system was well established in small cities, and that the activities of the unions were directed toward preventing members from working outside the shops, and employers from abolishing them. *Cf. reports of Springfield, Ill., and Bloomington, Ill., unions, Proceedings of the Journeymen Tailors' National Trade's Union, 1874, pp. 11, 15.*

⁶³ The system of private or rented shops, while in a sense a hybrid system, is not, economically speaking, different from the system of home work, but results from the same causes, namely, the desire of the journeymen to work with helpers, and to secure work from more than one store. In the report of the general secretary to the 1897 committee on laws and audit, the "private workshop" is included with the home shop and the sweatshop as one of the institutions to be abolished.

⁶⁴ John B. Lennon, article on "Back Shops," *The Tailor*, October, 1888, p. 5. It is usual in free shops to enforce a "turn-list," and the model

(4) A higher quality of work and a greater degree of convenience can be had in the free shops than elsewhere: (a) facilities are better than the tailors can provide for themselves; (b) tailors learn by working with their fellow-craftsmen; (c) the cutter always knows just what condition his work is in, and knows who can lay aside work in hand and take a "rush job;" (d) no time is lost on account of the journeyman being obliged to bring the garments back to the store to be tried on, and to wait for the cutter for new work.

(5) Home work prevents a proper acquaintance between the merchant tailor and the journeyman, and prevents the interchange of information among the journeymen themselves.

(6) Home work causes the employment of more tailors than are needed by each firm, creating a competition that is injurious to the workers.

(7) Home work is demoralizing to the tailors' children; they are kept from school to help "push through" the work; they become accustomed to seeing the father at his work indulge in the use of alcoholic drinks, and learn the habit.

(8) Home work prevents effective union organization, partly by isolating the workmen, and partly by creating jealousies among them, as indicated under other heads.⁶⁵

The above arguments indicate a strong case for the free shops, but arguments on the other side were not lacking. Some of the employers naturally objected to the additional expense of furnishing shops, and obtained a measure of justification for this

agreement of the Tailors' Union provides that during the dull season every employee shall have his share of work.

⁶⁵ For arguments in detail against home work and in favor of free shops, see articles by John B. Lennon, in *The Tailor*, October, 1888, p. 5, and October, 1889, p. 3; reports of same writer as general secretary, 1889, 1891, 1893, 1897, 1899, 1901; series of articles by Joseph R. Buchanan, on "Free Shops for Free Men," *The Tailor*, April, May, June, July, August, and September, 1902.

The American Tailor and Cutter, a fashion magazine, supported the journeymen tailors' side of the free shop question. *The Tailor*, October, 1888, p. 5, cols. 1 and 2. The tailors' campaign was also supported by the Illinois branch of the Consumers' League and by the *Chicago Record*. Cf. *The Tailor*, July, 1900, p. 10, article on "It is Time for the Revolution," reprinted from *Chicago Record*, March 16, 1900; also *The Tailor*, April, 1900, p. 2, circular of Consumers' League.

stand from the fact that the journeymen themselves were not united upon the question. Further attention will be given to this phase of the matter in the course of our account of the efforts of the union to obtain the free shops.

Considerations of the character noted above led the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America as early as 1884 to adopt resolutions condemning the system of home work,⁶⁶ and in 1887 a resolution was added against the "sweating system."⁶⁷ The 1893 convention directed the officers to see that existing factory laws against sweating be enforced, and called upon the legislative bodies of all states, territories and provinces to pass further legislation looking toward the abolition of the sweating evil. On the subject of workshops this convention recommended that the custom be discouraged of the tailors' bringing intoxicants into the shops, as many employers were refusing to grant free workshops on this account.⁶⁸ In addition, it proposed an amendment, for consideration by the members, as follows:⁶⁹

It shall be the duty of the general officers of the J. T. U. of A. to foster the movement for free workshops; it shall also be the duty of each L. U. to endeavor to secure the same as soon as practicable. And when an opportunity presents itself to obtain free workshops they shall make every effort in their power to secure the same.

This amendment was carried.

Prior to 1897 no action was taken to make the movement for free shops compulsory,⁷⁰ but in that year an amendment of a more drastic character was proposed by the committee on laws and audit, providing that on and after October 1, 1898, no member of the J. T. U. of A. should be permitted to work at home or in private shops, but that every member should work in free shops furnished by the employers, on pain of a fine of one dollar for each day's violation.⁷¹ Commenting upon this amendment, before the vote was taken, the secretary said:⁷²

⁶⁶ *Proceedings*, 1884, p. 13, Resolution No. 6.

⁶⁷ *Constitution*, 1887, p. 21, Resolution No. 12.

⁶⁸ *Proceedings*, 1893, *The Tailor*, August, 1893, p. 11.

⁶⁹ *The Tailor*, August, 1893, p. 13, Proposition No. 24, Sec. 144, *Cf. also Constitution*, 1894, Sec. 132; 1895, Sec. 131.

⁷⁰ The general secretary had recommended in 1893 that working in free shops be made compulsory on May 1, 1895, but the convention did not see fit to go further than the amendment already noted.

⁷¹ *The Tailor*, August, 1897, p. 16, Proposition No. 4.

⁷² *The Tailor*, September, 1897, p. 5.

In its probable effect upon our unions and upon the welfare of our craft, No. 4 is, no doubt, the most important amendment approved by the Committee. Upon the securing of free work shops depends the securing of every reform advocated by members of our craft.

The amendment was carried by a vote of 1,776 to 597.⁷³

As a preliminary to the enforcement of the amendment on the subject of free shops, Secretary Lennon sent out a circular to all unions, in which each was requested to answer the following questions:

1. Total number of members in local union;
2. Number of members working in employers' back-shops;
3. Number of members working outside;
4. Will your local union be prepared to demand free back-shops October 1, 1898?
5. Will a strike probably be necessary to enforce free back-shops?
6. Amount of funds in local treasury.

Returns were due April 1, 1898. Returns from a number of cities were late, but by September, 1898, it was possible to publish returns from all but nine local unions; i. e., from 202 out of 211 locals.⁷⁴ For the 202 locals reporting the returns were as follows:

Total number of members.....	5,061
Number of members working in employers' back-shops.....	1,991
Number of members working outside.....	3,070

On the fourth and fifth questions the returns were characterized by the secretary as "indefinite." A few locals failed to answer the sixth question, but as many as answered reported a total of \$4,003 in local union treasuries. Concluding his comment upon the returns, the secretary said:

The question of securing free back-shops is now in the hands of the members of the J. T. U. of A. The general officers cannot enforce this law, and will not be responsible if it is not enforced, as this is something over which they have absolutely no control. The local unions, if they will act with discretion . . . and by committees consult and confer with the employers of their respective cities, can obtain the free back-shops, in the most cases within a short period of time, without any strikes.

The subsequent history of the movement for free shops is one of partial failure and partial success. It was found impossible to enforce strictly the mandatory provisions, and these provisions were accordingly modified. The section placing a fine on

⁷³ *The Tailor*, November, 1897, p. 8.

⁷⁴ *The Tailor*, September, 1898, pp. 8-9.

members for working outside of the free shops lasted only two years, being replaced in 1899 by the following amendment:⁷⁵

On February 1 and July 1 of each year the G. E. B. shall designate one or more local unions to demand from their employers free back shops. No L. U. shall be selected until by a majority vote the L. U. have shown that they are prepared and favor free back shops. Locals so designated shall be sustained by the J. T. U. of A. if a strike becomes necessary to enforce the demand. Unions so selected by the G. E. B. shall enforce the demand within 60 days from February 1 or July 1. The usual two-thirds majority shall be required to call the members out.

Some progress was made under the amendment of 1899. In 1901 a more elaborate plan was adopted than any hitherto proposed. The country was divided into five districts, numbered in the order of the difficulty which was anticipated in enforcing the free shops.⁷⁶ Local unions in the first district, in which conditions were regarded as the most favorable, were to enforce free shops April 1, 1902; in the second district, September 1, 1902; in the third district, April 1, 1903; in the fourth district, September 1, 1903; and in the fifth district, April 1, 1904. The following provision was added:

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent any local union from enforcing free shops at any time they are prepared. The G. E. B. shall have power under this section to exempt any local union temporarily from the requirements of this section when found necessary.

This general plan remained in force until 1905. In 1903 the following modifying provisions were added:⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *The Tailor*, August, 1899, p. 16, Proposition No. 2, *Constitution*, 1900, Sec. 20.

⁷⁶ *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 19, Proposition No. 3. The districts were as follows:

First district: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada.

Second district: All of Canada.

Third district: Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee.

Fourth district: Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Fifth district: New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

⁷⁷ *The Tailor*, September, 1903, p. 1, Proposition No. 3; *Constitution*, 1904, Sec. 21.

Each local union after investigation by a committee, when the evidence warrants, shall have the power to excuse any member from working in the free shops. A two-thirds majority shall be required in each case.

The use of the label shall not be permitted on the work of any firm after January 1, 1906, that does not furnish a free shop.

In 1905, the following sections were substituted for the whole:⁷⁸

All local unions that have not secured free back-shops shall do so as speedily as possible, but each local union shall be the sole judge of when it is safe and expedient to resort to extreme action to secure them. If any local union desires to strike for free back-shops, a two-thirds majority shall be required. Said action must be in accordance with sections 75 and 76 governing strikes and lockouts.

Resolved: That the J. T. U. of A. in conjunction with A. F. of L. do all in their power to abolish home work through legislation.

It will be observed from the amendments noted above that the original mandatory rules on the subject of the enforcement of free shops were materially relaxed. The reasons for this seem to have been twofold: (1) the fact that the members were not united in demanding the free shops, a considerable number refusing to work in them; (2) the growing conviction on the part of the officers that home work was an inevitable consequence of the piece system, and that the attention of the union should be turned to the abolition of the latter system. In his 1901 report ⁷⁹ Secretary Lennon said:

I regret to say that we still have quite a considerable minority of our members who are opposed to having free shops furnished by the employers.

And in his 1905 report:⁸⁰

While the piece system of work so largely prevails in our trade, it appears as though it will be almost impossible to completely enforce the free shop system, and this more because of the opposition of the journeymen tailors, than from the opposition of the employers. To work at home gives the journeyman tailor an opportunity to work for several different establishments, and they believe as a rule that this is an advantage to them, and believing that, it is almost an impossibility to persuade or force every one into the free shops. I believe, however, that it is absolutely essential for the progress of our craftsmen that we continue to stand for the enforcement of the free shop, and that wherever it be possible our unions establish this system in their respective communities. When the time comes that the piece

⁷⁸ *The Tailor*, March, 1905, pp. 2, 5, Propositions 2, 41; vote, May, 1905, supplement; *Constitution*, 1905, Sec. 21.

⁷⁹ *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 5.

⁸⁰ *The Tailor*, February, 1905, p. 7.

work system is supplanted by daily or weekly wage rates, then the free shops will become universal at once, and so anxious was I for the application of the free shops that I have no hesitation in saying that I believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that working by the piece is perhaps the greatest possible injury that could be perpetrated upon our craftsmen throughout the length and breadth of the world. It is unfortunate that we have permitted it to become so prevalent, and it is more unfortunate that a great majority of our members are favorable to piece work. The history of the labor movement and of the industrial world has demonstrated clearly that long hours are almost the universal concomitant of piece work, and it equally shows that long hours are accompanied by low wages. We want the free shops because the tailors need better wages. Better wages in the main cannot be had without a reduction of the hours of labor, and the reduction of the hours of labor cannot be expected to any very great extent while the piece work system prevails in the tailoring industry, and it seems to me, therefore, that we should turn our attention with all the vigor possible to creating among our members a sentiment favorable to working by the week.

The official reports of Secretary Lennon in 1907 and 1909, and of Secretary Brais in 1913,⁸¹ indicated little change in the situation since 1905. In each of these reports the fact was emphasized that many of the Journeymen Tailors themselves were not favorable to the free shops. In the 1907 report it was stated that even in some cities where the free shops had been secured, they were lost again on account of the opposition of the Tailors. In the 1909 report the opinion was expressed that the new system of making custom clothing in factories would mean free shops and the limitation of hours, and that thus far the new system was to be commended. The 1913 report is quoted, as the latest official statement on this subject:

It is true that a great many of our members enjoy free back shops, but the home work system is still an established custom and many members of the J. T. U. of A. do not want to change it. They are satisfied and will not do anything to change it. They favor the free back shop as a principle adopted in their constitution, but when it comes to enforcing it, it is a joke.

The piece work system must go before any real progress can be made in our trade. Both the home work and the piece work systems are conducive to long hours of labor; child labor; sweat shops; contract systems; cheap labor; low wages and a general deterioration of the health of the workers.

The net results of the campaign for free shops between 1898 and 1905 may best be indicated in tabular form, as follows:

⁸¹ *The Tailor*, August, 1907, p. 4; August, 1909, p. 10; August, 1913, p. 12.

	<i>Total membership (est.)</i>	<i>In free shops ⁸²</i>	<i>Outside</i>	<i>Per cent in free shops</i>
September, 1898	5061	1991	3070	39
July, 1899	6217	2627	3590	42
July, 1901	9727	4200	5527	43
July, 1903	14496	8367	6129	58
January, 1905	14100	8000	6000	57

Returns from a limited portion of the membership were also received in 1912, indicating conditions on January 1 of that year. In 71 cities reporting, there were 5,366 union members, and of these 2,308, or 43 per cent, were working in free shops. The returns represented only 23 per cent of the local unions and 39 per cent of the membership, and since, of the 5,366 members reporting, 4,047 were in large cities (over 100,000), the returns probably are not representative of the situation throughout the whole country. Of the 4,047 members in large cities, 1,253 were in the free shops, or 31 per cent; while of 1,319 members in cities of less than 100,000 population, 1,055 were in the free shops, or 80 per cent. It should not be concluded from this, that the percentage of members in free shops is low in all large cities. There are some notable exceptions; for example: St. Paul, Winnipeg, Portland (Ore.), Seattle, Milwaukee, Atlanta, and San Francisco.⁸³

Referring to conditions at the present time (1917), the writer is informed that little effort is being made to force members by means of fines to work in the free shops.⁸⁴ The model form of agreement between local unions and employers⁸⁵ provides that where free shops exist, all work shall be done on the employer's premises, and where the local unions have this form of agreement with employers furnishing shops, home work is automatically prevented. The most important movement against home work recently made was the attempt of the New York union in 1916 to secure free shops, increased wages and the employment of union men only. This strike was lost by the union, and led to a considerable loss of membership in New York City.

⁸² Estimated by Secretary Lennon from incomplete returns from local unions. Cf. *The Tailor*, September, 1898, pp. 8-9; August, 1899, p. 7; August, 1901, p. 5; August, 1903, p. 4; February, 1905, p. 7.

⁸³ Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 157, and table, pp. 151-155.

⁸⁴ Secretary Thomas Sweeney, correspondence, January 24, 1917.

⁸⁵ Cf. *supra*, note 22.

The attitude hostile to the piece system indicated by Secretary Lennon in 1905 was endorsed by the union in 1909, and again in 1913.⁸⁶ Nevertheless the substitution of the weekly system for the piece system is proceeding but slowly. As in the case of the free shops, the movement is retarded by individual journeymen and employers who prefer the old system. The piece system appeals to employers because it is easy to adjust to seasonal irregularities, and because it facilitates the calculation of costs. It is also favored by many of the journeymen, because they think they can make more money under this system, and because they do not like the confinement of a shop and fixed hours. The movement for the abolition of the piece system is likely to

⁸⁶ The following resolution was submitted by the 1909 convention and approved by referendum vote:

"*Resolved*: That we recommend to all our members the substitution of the weekly system of work instead of the piece system."

In 1913 a declaration in favor of eliminating the piece work system was added to the preamble of the constitution. Cf. *The Tailor*, August, 1909, p. 44, Proposition No. 40, Sec. 5; vote: November, 1909, supplement; *Constitution*, 1914, Preamble.

The movement against the piece system was not new at these dates, but beginning in 1905 appears to have been given greater prominence as a reform necessary before other reforms could be carried out. As early as May, 1886, the *American Tailor and Cutter* expressed the opinion that the piece work system was mainly responsible for existing troubles in the tailoring trade, and in 1889 Secretary Lennon declared that the piece system was the greatest evil in the trade except the lack of free shops. *The Tailor*, October, 1888, p. 5, col. 2; December, 1889, p. 4, col. 2.

The characteristic trade union argument against the piece system appears very clearly in the following extract from an article by P. Ewald Jensen, a tailor of Chicago, in *The Tailor*, May, 1892, p. 5:

"Piece work, as a system to work by, has in the past history of labor proven itself to be detrimental to the best interest of the wage earners, because its natural tendency is to lower wages. This is brought about for the simple reason that piece work wages as a rule are gauged by the producing power of the ablest, the superior mechanic, consequently the slow or inferior mechanic or laborer is thereby degraded into starvation wages. Whenever a reduction in prices takes place, we find the superior workman who is capable of exerting himself even more so prompted by said reduction, doing all in his power to maintain his former wages by tasking his system to its utmost capacity. The employer, seeing this, will, as the case is, further reduce the price on the piece work, and wages thereby are lowered to its death line. The inferior workman is thereby put to a level with the beggar, he having no choice in the matter, simply to submit."

make the most headway where team systems and sectional systems of production,⁸⁷ which nearly always involve payment by the week, are being installed upon the initiative of the employers. The situation at present may be illustrated by the following report from Denver, Colorado:⁸⁸

The union has succeeded in introducing in some shops the weekly pay scale, where the tailors enjoy a nine hours' work day, double pay for holidays, and time-and-a-half for overtime. This alone gives good hopes that the rest of the shops will soon fall in line.

Since the weekly pay system is not introduced in all the shops, a friction exists between some of our brothers. Some piece workers do not quite understand the benefits which week workers derive under their system. They think they are a kind of obstruction to their own progress, and therefore try to blockade by denouncing the week workers. On the other end, the week workers who are satisfied with their present conditions want the piece workers to join them, and thereby better their conditions.

The Denver correspondent indicates further that another cause of friction is the effort to adjust the wages of helpers of ments of this character will probably be difficult until the weekly workers, whose helpers are paid by the employers, so that neither class of workers will have the advantage of the other. Adjustments of this character will probably be difficult until the weekly system is completely established, and this, in the writer's opinion, will not take place for a number of years to come.

It is interesting to note the curious evolution of opinion which has taken place with reference to the system of payment. Time payment was the rule in England during the period of parliamentary regulation, and the English tailors struck against piece work when it was first introduced.⁸⁹ But piece work seems to have been the rule in America since an early date,⁹⁰ and it is only recently that the American tailors are getting back to the old idea of time payment.

The campaign of the Tailors' Union for free shops and the abolition of the piece system, cannot, in view of the results, be regarded as a complete failure. Nevertheless, it is a good illustration of the difficulty which is encountered, both in civic communities and in labor organizations, of enforcing by means of

⁸⁷ Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, 29-32; also *infra*, pp. 51-52.

⁸⁸ *The Tailor*, March 13, 1917, p. 3, col. 2, letter from Goodman Levin.

⁸⁹ Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

laws and rules reforms to which a considerable minority are opposed.

(f) *The "Efficiency" Movement*

The modern movement for "efficiency" or "scientific management," in so far as it concerns the workers in the tailoring industry, has taken two principal forms: (1) improved methods of cost accounting, particularly with reference to labor costs; (2) changes in the system of production.

(1) Improved methods of labor cost accounting. Only a limited number of cost schedules used in, or suggested for, the merchant tailoring business have come to the writer's attention, and it is difficult to perceive in these any general principle for the calculation of labor costs. As a rule the labor cost rises with the selling price of the suit, but not in a fixed proportion, the percentage of labor cost to selling price varying considerably in the schedules the writer has seen. In some of these schedules apparently the selling price is determined first, and the "overhead" being regarded as constant (about 25 per cent), the accountant proceeds to figure what costs for material and journeymen tailors' labor he can afford for a suit of the given price, if a given percentage of profit is to be realized. In other schedules all costs are determined first, and the selling price is adjusted to yield the desired percentage of profit.

It will be recalled that the official bill of prices of the Tailors' Union recognizes only two classes of piece rates for the same kind of garment. For example, in the bill of prices of the Burlington, Iowa, local union, dated 1906, which follows closely the form of the official bill, the scale for sack coats is as follows:

	<i>1st class</i>	<i>2nd class</i>
Double-breasted sack coat.....	\$8.00	\$7.50
Single-breasted sack coat.....	7.50	7.00

This scale gives the price for "start" of the coat. There is in the Burlington bill a charge of 50 cents extra for trying on the coat, and if there are any "extras" or fancy additions to the plain pattern, something is added to the piece price on account of these "extras." The basis of classification as between "1st class" and "2nd class" is the kind of material of which the garment is made. This is a different kind of schedule from that usually proposed by efficiency experts, which, whatever the prin-

ciple employed, may yield as many as seven or eight classes of labor costs for a range of selling prices of suits, say from \$35 to \$70. Upon the general idea of piece rates graduated according to selling prices, the Tailors' journal has the following to say:⁹¹

We have no hesitation in saying that the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America will not commit itself to any such plan, the plan being wrong in principle. Wages cannot be fixed by the selling price of suits. If that was admitted as a sound rule, it would also be sound to make suits for nothing in case the employers saw fit to give suits away free of charge.

(2) Changes in the system of production. Under what is known among tailors as the "old-line" system, each garment is made by a specialist, coatmaker, vestmaker, or trousersmaker, who has served an apprenticeship or undergone an equivalent training for his own particular branch of the trade. The skilled journeyman may finish the entire garment himself, or he may turn over a portion of the work, requiring less skill, to his helper. There are variations in the system due to the employment of more than one helper, but in such cases the tailor and his several helpers do not constitute a "team," in the sense that a different kind of work is assigned to each helper, unless the tailor is an unusually capable organizer and manager. In any case, the subdivision of work is under the control of the journeyman, and not under the control of his employer; and it frequently happens that the journeyman is engaged on processes which could be carried on by workers of less skill and of a shorter period of training. It was no doubt the observation of this fact which led to the devising of new and different systems of production.

Under the new systems, the aim is to employ the services of the highly skilled tailor only on those portions of the work where they are absolutely needed, the balance being turned over to operatives, each of whom is skilled in some one of the finishing processes. In the most highly developed form of this system there is no such thing as a "skilled coatmaker," for example. Each employee is a specialist upon some section of the coat. All employees, including the lowest paid helpers, are paid by the employer, and the subdivision of labor is under his supervision, or that of the cutter or foreman whom he hires. The establishment of the new systems involves almost invariably the establish-

⁹¹ *The Tailor*, April 3, 1917, p. 3.

ment of a workshop by the employer and the payment of all employees by the week instead of by the piece.

It is obvious that unless the volume of custom tailoring to be done increases on account of improved methods, decreased costs and lowered prices, the new systems require the services of fewer skilled journeymen than before. Like the workers in other trades in which similar changes were taking place, the tailors fixed their attention upon the immediate consequences rather than upon the ultimate consequences of the change, and tried to oppose it.⁹² However, so little success was met with that finally it became the policy of the national union not to support strikes for this purpose, as long as there was any possibility of securing an agreement between the employers and the union for the government of the new system after it was started.⁹³ It was not always possible to re-employ all of the journeymen, but frequently some of them could be re-employed, and this was considered better, provided union conditions could be had, than a strike. It has already been noted that in so far as the new systems tend to accelerate the movement toward the time system of payment and free workshops, they are not regarded as a disadvantage by the union officials.

⁹² The contest with the firm of Gray and Graham, Dallas, Texas, in 1903, is a good example of a contest arising out of the change of system. This firm appears to have dispensed with the services of union men altogether, in order to have a free hand for the introduction of the team system, and for this reason the tailors referred to the contest as a "lockout." However, the contest would not probably have arisen if the union had not been opposed to the new system. The firm in question employed before the lockout about forty journeymen, and paid a good piece-scale: coats \$8.00 and upward, pants \$2.75 and upward, vests \$2.50 and upward. After introducing the new system they employed about 50 people in the operating department, only about four of whom were highly skilled workers, the balance being operatives who had learned specialized processes. All employees were paid on a time basis. The wages in 1911 ranged from \$3.00 to \$15.00 per week. (Correspondence with local union, 1911.) The union was not successful in preventing the establishment of the new system, which, so far as the writer knows, is still in operation.

⁹³ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 82: "No strike shall be supported where the employer desires to change from the piece system to the weekly system, where conditions are satisfactory to the employees." The last clause is somewhat ambiguous, but is interpreted by the writer to mean, "where conditions are satisfactory to as many of the union men as can be re-employed," regardless of the feelings of those who are displaced.

(g) *Regulation of Helpers and Apprentices*

Since, in a majority of cases, the tailor's helper or apprentice is employed by the tailor himself, the regulation of helpers and apprentices is a matter almost wholly internal to the union, and not subject to collective bargaining with the employers. The only exceptions to this rule occur where the employer takes the initiative in trying to induce journeymen to take apprentices, or where a weekly system has been established, placing helpers and apprentices under the employer's control. The whole subject of the regulation of helpers and apprentices will therefore be discussed in a separate chapter, and the limited connection of the subject with collective bargaining will be taken up in that chapter.

4. STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS

(a) *Definitions*

Strikes. The term "strike" is familiar, and scarcely requires definition. In general a strike implies that the initiative in the dispute leading to a cessation of work is taken by the workmen.

Lockouts. The term "lockout" is used somewhat indiscriminately in the tailoring trade, to indicate any of the following situations:

(1) All union members discharged, and declaration made by employers that no unionists will be employed.

(2) One or more unionists discharged, on account of special activity in the union.

(3) Unionists permitted to remain at work, provided they will bargain as individuals; employers refuse to sign any agreement with union.

The question as to whether a disturbance is a strike or a lockout has come up in connection with the applications of local unions to the General Executive Board for support. In such cases the first situation named has always been recognized as a lockout. The second case might be regarded as a partial lockout, but it is more usual to refer to the members discharged as "victimized." While recognizing that "victimized" members have a grievance, the union has not as a rule demanded their reinstatement by the employer, but has simply aided such members from the strike benefit fund until they could get work elsewhere.

As to the third case, it may be regarded as nearly equivalent to the first, as the employers know that as a rule the members will not work under these conditions. However, technically speaking, it is better to regard a disturbance growing out of this case as a strike for enforcing the system of collective bargaining, rather than as a lockout.

Closely connected with the situations named above are those where the employers refuse to employ unionists under any circumstances, or where they demand an agreement from prospective employees that they will not join a union. These are to be regarded as phases of the "black-list."

If the above distinctions are followed, the greater number of the important controversies that have taken place in the tailoring trade can be brought under the head of "strikes."

(b) General Strike Policy of the Union

From the very beginning it has been the policy of the national union to maintain centralized control of strikes. The principal aid to maintaining this kind of control is the fact that the strike benefit fund is governed by the national union. Before granting support to any local union it has been customary to make the following requirements:

(1) A genuine effort must be made by the local union to settle the controversy by negotiation with the employers, before calling a strike. If such negotiation fails, a secret vote of the union is to be taken as to whether the members involved shall be called out and supported, a two-thirds vote to decide.

(2) Before any strike is actually begun, full information must be sent to headquarters, indicating the cause of difficulty; the number of members likely to be involved; the likelihood of all such members responding to a strike call, if it is ordered; the condition of trade, and the prospects of success. No members must be called out until permission has been received from the General Executive Board. Failure to observe this provision debars the local union from the receipt of benefit, and any strike undertaken without the sanction of the Executive Board must be carried on at the risk and expense of the local union.

(3) As a rule the union is requested to delay radical action and to keep the members at work until a representative of the

national union can be sent to the city to endeavor to secure a settlement. Many strikes have been avoided in this way, the services of the national organizers in helping to settle local controversies being fully as important as their strictly organizing duties.

The essentials of the policy outlined above may be found in the earliest constitutions of the national union,⁹⁴ and with some modifications have been continued to the present date.

(c) *Strike Benefit*

Members who are on a strike which is legal under the constitution and approved by the Executive Board receive from the national union the sum of five dollars per week. No strike benefit is paid for the first week of any strike, nor for any strike involving one-third or more of the members of the J. T. U. of A.⁹⁵

The expenditure for strike benefit since the union was founded has been larger than for any other single item. In the period beginning August 15, 1887, and ending June 30, 1916, the total amount expended for strike benefit was \$565,089.44.

In addition to the national strike benefit, there are three sources of income upon which local unions involved in severely contested strikes have relied for support: (1) local strike benefits; (2) donations from other local unions affiliated with the J. T. U. of A.; (3) donations from unions in other trades.

(1) Local strike benefits. Local strike benefits may be paid from funds accumulated in the local treasury, or, in cases where all of the members of the union are not involved in the strike, the benefits may be raised by assessment upon the members remaining at work. The general officers have discouraged unions from attempting to pay local strike benefits, on the ground that it may be impossible to keep up the payments throughout the strike, or to make them in every strike, and in such a case members are disappointed and have an excuse for deserting the union.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Cf. By-laws of 1884, Articles 12, 13.

⁹⁵ *Constitution*, 1914, Secs. 83-84. In case of emergency, due-bills may be issued for the strike benefit. (Sec. 87.) Other sections governing the strike benefit are Secs. 90, 91, and 93.

⁹⁶ *The Tailor*, April, 1901, p. 8, third editorial; October, 1903, p. 17, article on "Local Strike Benefits."

(2) Donations from other local unions affiliated with the J. T. U. of A. In the case of severely contested strikes involving enough members to put a strain upon the national treasury, appeals have been sent out to the local unions not affected by the strike. These appeals upon the whole have met with success, and large amounts of money have been raised in this way.

(3) Donations from unions of other trades. Appeals for donations from other trades are handled through the American Federation of Labor, and must be endorsed by that body. It has been necessary to resort to this method of raising money on only a few occasions, the most important being the contests between the Tailors' Union and the Merchant Tailors' Protective Association in 1903 and 1904, involving the locals in Denver, Kansas City, Cleveland, and some other cities. In the course of these contests the sum of \$5,524.32 was raised through the American Federation of Labor for the assistance of the tailors.⁹⁷ The Federation also gave assistance to the tailors and certain other trades who were locked out in Los Angeles in 1907.⁹⁸

(d) *Detailed regulation of strikes*

The full text of the regulations on the subject of strikes and strike benefit is found in the constitution, 1914, Sections 79-95. In addition to the points discussed above, the most important provisions are as follows:

(1) After a union has complied fully with the constitution and has voted to strike, the General Executive Board has the power either to sustain the local union or to refuse to sustain it. If the Executive Board refuses to sustain the local union, an appeal may be taken to the general membership, and if the appeal is sustained by a majority of the members voting, the local union shall be sustained by the Executive Board.⁹⁹

(2) No local union can receive strike benefit where it has broken an existing agreement with employers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Cf. copy of A. F. of L. resolutions endorsing Tailors' appeal, *The Tailor*, December, 1903, p. 21; also financial statements in *The Tailor* for the months November, 1903, to May, 1904, inclusive.

⁹⁸ *The Tailor*, November, 1907, p. 12; December, 1907, p. 1. The assistance in this case took the form of contributions to the organizing funds of various unions in Los Angeles, but was occasioned by the lockouts.

⁹⁹ *Constitution*, 1914, Secs. 81, 82.

¹⁰⁰ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 90.

(3) The Executive Board has power to terminate the payment of strike benefit to a local union, if in the judgment of the board the strike should cease, but this action of the board is subject to an appeal to a general vote, to the next convention, or to the committee on laws and audit.¹⁰¹

It has been found that if a strike is to be won at all, it should be won quickly. The longer it continues, the greater is the opportunity of the employer to replace the men and get his work done. The Lennon administration was accustomed to advise locals that as soon as it became evident that a strike could not be won, it should be called off at once, and the members allowed to go to work. It was found that there was a disposition after a strike was lost for the local union to boycott the employer and refuse permission to its members to work for him. This policy was discouraged by the administration, on the ground that it would be better to allow the members to go to work and make an effort to unionize the store again. Another question of great importance in strikes is the question of members on strike going to work in other stores or leaving the city. This practice has been strongly condemned by the general officers, on the evident ground that it is impossible to maintain a strong front if the strikers are dropping away one by one. The policy advised has been to make a brisk contest with the aid of all the members involved, and then if defeat is in sight, to call off the whole affair at once. Obvious as this course seems to be, it is surprising how hard it has been found, when men's stubbornness was aroused, to get a strike called off.

Members on strike are not left to their own devices and without supervision. They are required to report regularly to the officers, and are assigned various duties connected with the strike, such as picketing and committee work. Every effort is made to give businesslike efficiency to the strike.

(e) *Enforcement of strike regulations*

During the period when the conduct of the general office was under the writer's direct observation, there was no instance in which a strike in violation of the constitution was overlooked by the general secretary. In every such case the union was reminded sharply of its neglect to follow the usual rules, and was

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 93.

given to understand that it was only by a special dispensation that the Executive Board could consider its case at all; and in a number of cases support and strike benefit were refused altogether. Carelessness on the part of local unions in this respect has called forth more than one vigorous warning in the columns of the official journal.¹⁰²

(f) *Avoidance and settlement of strikes*

The development of new and cheaper systems of tailoring, and the presence in the country of large numbers of workers who could take the place if necessary of skilled custom tailors, have made discretion peculiarly necessary on the part of the Tailors' Union. For many years it has been the policy of the responsible officers to oppose absolutely beginning a strike unless there are reasonable prospects of success. The writer has seen many letters from headquarters to local unions, implying strongly that the central office, with its wider viewpoint, was in a position to perceive dangers not visible to the locals, particularly the presence of potential strike breakers in neighboring localities. Another maxim that has been strongly insisted upon at headquarters has been: "Never break off negotiations." The general office, by sending national organizers or committees from neighboring towns, has always made every effort possible to secure the settlement of strikes.

It has not happened very frequently that state or federal officials have intervened in tailors' strikes, as these strikes are not usually of sufficient magnitude to attract outside attention. It is a matter of interest, however, that the first case considered by the new industrial commission of Colorado was a case involving the journeymen tailors of Denver and their employers.¹⁰³ The journeymen tailors' union of Denver having presented demands to the employers, an extended hearing was had before the industrial commission. The necessary papers calling for an inves-

¹⁰² Cf. *The Tailor*, September, 1897, p. 12; March, 1902, p. 11.

¹⁰³ The Colorado law provides for investigation of industrial disputes by the industrial commission, and makes it a misdemeanor for the union to declare a strike or the employers a lockout prior to or during the investigation, provided the industry is "affected with a public interest." Cf. text of law in *Bulletin of U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, Whole No. 186, pp. 105-118.

tigation were filed with the commission about September 30, 1915, and a reprint of its findings is found in *The Tailor*, May 23, 1916. The grievances of the tailors, as quoted in the commission's report, were as follows: Low wages; long hours; employers not furnishing trimmings; time lost on try-ons; lack of sanitary shops; bad light and bad ventilation; no standard price for tailors' labor, compelling tailors to compete against each other at very low wages; demand for extra pay for extras, over-time and alterations; demand for recognition of the union. In its report the commission found that the demands of the journey-men tailors were "substantially just." Some specific recommendations in the report are as follows:

- (1) Increase in the size of tailoring establishments, so that employers can afford to furnish good shops and pay good wages.
- (2) Prohibition by state or federal law of the manufacture of clothing in the tailors' homes.
- (3) Inauguration of the "team system" of production, permitting subdivision of work and regulation of hours.
- (4) Establishment of a definite and uniform scale of wages and a nine-hour day.

The commission's report on conditions in Denver applies remarkably well to other localities throughout the country. The following passage is especially significant:

The ramifications of the tailoring industry are so vast and varied as to make this business more complex and difficult to handle than probably any other proposition in the United States. One prolific source of trouble and one hard to eradicate is the fact that with a capital of \$100 or \$200 many a business is launched. This insufficiency of capital handicaps the new adventurer in this business. In the first place he has to pay about 50 per cent more for his goods on account of having to buy in small quantities. The heavy interest charges paid on borrowed capital, high rental for stores, etc., etc., is so enormous and burdensome that many good intentioned and industrious men lose their little all, while those remaining eke out but a precarious and miserable existence. With one, two or three tailors working in such establishments, it would be utmost folly to expect that the conditions of the tailors could be anything other than hard and that the pay must of necessity be small. Because of the facts that the business can be carried on in the home where the family may assist in the piece work system, and that the hours, wages, etc., are not up to the standard of other artisans, American labor has not been attracted to this branch of business. In Denver not one American born tailor is employed. This being so does not relieve society of responsibility, but makes action to improve conditions

the more imperative on all. The evidence before us shows that during the busy season it is not at all unusual, but is in fact the universal custom, for tailors to work from six-thirty a.m. until nine, ten and eleven o'clock at night. It is a sad commentary on American institutions to think that human beings could be on such a plane in this enlightened day. Working under such a system is inimical to society and almost any reasonable action would be justifiable for its elimination.¹⁰⁴

On the subject of recognition of the union, the commission stated that of necessity it must recognize labor organizations as representing employees in hearings before the commission, but that this ruling does not affect in any way the recognition or non-recognition of the union by any employer.

Largely as the result of the commission's findings, twenty-four merchant tailors of Denver signed agreements with the union, calling for a nine-hour day and the "back shop" system. Only one firm, an agency firm with headquarters and factory in Chicago, refused to sign the agreement. While some dissatisfaction was expressed by the journeymen over delay in rendering the decision, the findings of the commission were very well received by the men and regarded by them as a victory.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *The Tailor*, May 23, 1916, p. 1, col. 4.

¹⁰⁵ *The Tailor*, March 21, 1916, p. 1, col. 4; p. 4, col. 4.

(g) *Statistics of Strikes**Strikes and lockouts in the tailoring trade, 1881-1916*¹⁰⁶

PERIOD	Number of Strikes	Won or Compromised	Lost	Members Involved	Members Benefited	Members Not Benefited	Per Cent Benefited of Total Involved	National Strike Benefit Paid
Jan. 1, 1881 - Dec. 31, 1886...	35	23	12	2476	1886	590	76	
Aug. 15, 1887 - July 31, 1889..	40	35	5	....	....	....	....	\$ 3,438.00
Aug. 1, 1889 - July 31, 1891..	219	185	34	....	....	....	....	14,683.01
Aug. 1, 1891 - June 30, 1893..	150	135	15	....	....	....	....	24,369.25
July 1, 1893 - June 30, 1895..	....	....	..	....	....	....	....	27,485.05
July 1, 1895 - June 30, 1897..	....	....	..	....	....	....	....	12,565.95
July 1, 1897 - June 30, 1899..	40	33	7	1263	1216	47	96	4,371.00
July 1, 1899 - June 30, 1901..	78	72	6	1846	1423	423	77	28,463.25
July 1, 1901 - June 30, 1903..	113	113	0	1862	....	....	....	34,262.50
July 1, 1903 - Aug. 31, 1903..	....	....	..	....	....	....	....	9,014.00
Sept. 1, 1903 - Aug. 31, 1904..	24	18	6	1142	340	802	30	44,315.00
Sept. 1, 1904 - Aug. 31, 1905..	22	16	6	641	397	244	62	11,414.00
Sept. 1, 1905 - Aug. 31, 1906..	16	14	2	800	735	65	92	9,676.50
Sept. 1, 1906 - Aug. 31, 1907..	22	19	3	1810	1400	410	77	21,275.00
Sept. 1, 1907 - Aug. 31, 1908..	21	16	5	400	....	....	....	78,613.85
Sept. 1, 1908 - Aug. 31, 1909..	18	15	3	500	420	80	84	12,960.50
Sept. 1, 1909 - Aug. 31, 1910..	17	12	5	706	588	118	83	6,580.00
Sept. 1, 1910 - Aug. 31, 1911..	13	8	5	169	139	30	82	9,901.00
Sept. 1, 1911 - Aug. 31, 1912..	11	6	5	504	....	....	....	52,134.10
Sept. 1, 1912 - Aug. 31, 1913..	23	21	2	728	....	....	....	57,877.68
Sept. 1, 1913 - Aug. 31, 1914..	7	7	0	....	....	....	....	12,026.85
Sept. 1, 1914 - Aug. 31, 1915..	5	5	0	50	15	35	30	6,400.00
Sept. 1, 1915 - Aug. 31, 1916..	12	8	4	1725	700	1025	60	57,163.50

¹⁰⁶ *Source of accuracy.* The figures for the first period, covering six years from 1881 to 1886, inclusive, are taken from the third annual report of the United States commissioner of labor, published in 1887. These figures cannot be regarded as exhaustive; they appear to include only the most important strikes of the period.

Following 1886 there is a period of eight and one-half months, to the middle of August, 1887, for which we have no record. Beginning with October, 1887, the files of *The Tailor* are available, and they give a record beginning with the convention which concluded on August 15. From this point down to June 30, 1903, the figures are taken from the biennial reports of the general secretary of the Tailors' Union. For the two months from July 1 to August 31, 1903, the strike benefit has been compiled from the monthly expense accounts in *The Tailor*, but the other items are not supplied. Beginning with September 1, 1903, the reports found in the proceedings of the annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor have been followed. These reports were furnished by the general secretary of

Supplementary statistics of strikes, 1909-1913

The above table does not indicate the number of cases in which the unions were able to gain all or a part of their demands by peaceable negotiations, nor does it indicate the causes of strikes. Information of this kind is not at hand except for the four years beginning July 1, 1909, and ending June 30, 1913. For this period the following data are given by Secretary Brais in his 1913 report:¹⁰⁷

the Tailors' Union to the secretary of the federation, and are slightly more complete than those published by the Tailors in their own journal. There are a few gaps in the table, which are explained by the lack of definite information for the periods in question. In connection with all figures furnished by the secretary of the Tailors, it should be noted that they are not to be accepted as mathematically exact, but are based upon the best data that the secretary was able to obtain from the expense accounts of the national union and from the correspondence with local unions regarding the strikes. It is believed that the figures are fairly reliable for purposes of comparison.

Definitions and notation. A disturbance originating in several stores in a given city at about the same date is counted as a single strike. The writer has followed the practice of the officers of the Tailors' Union in this matter. Where necessary the reports of the United States commissioner of labor have been modified to agree with this method of recording strikes.

Each strike has been counted in the period during which it terminated. This is necessary in order to tabulate the results. Strike records are based largely upon benefit paid, and strikes lasting only a few days, so that no benefit was due under the union laws, are not, as a rule, counted at all.

Strikes by which the journeymen secured all or a part of their demands, or by which reductions or other aggressions upon the part of the employers were successfully resisted, are listed as "won or compromised." Strikes where the men went back to work without securing any of their demands, or where they were obliged to accept reductions, are listed as "lost." Members involved in won or compromised strikes are held to have been "benefited." Members involved in lost strikes are held to have been "not benefited." The term "benefited" in this connection refers to the direct result of the strike in question; no attempt is made to estimate the absolute results of strikes, or to balance gains in wages and conditions against losses of time and expenses of union maintenance.

¹⁰⁷ *The Tailor*, August, 1913.

Results of negotiations with employers

Number of cases of negotiation or dispute in which the local union was sustained by the General Executive Board ¹⁰⁸	287
Number of cases in which the local unions secured gains without strike.....	195
Number of cases involving "victimized" members ¹⁰⁹	22
Number of cases resulting in strikes and lockouts.....	70
Total.....	287

Results of strikes and lockouts

Won	39
Compromised	3
Lost	26
Pending at close of term.....	2
Total.....	70

Causes of strikes and lockouts

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Number</i>
Demand for increased wages.....	30
Union shop question.....	7
Change of system of production.....	7
Discharge of unionists.....	5
Reduction of wages threatened.....	3
Dispute over hours of labor.....	2
Violation of agreement by employers.....	1
Employers sending work out of shop.....	1
Demand for free workshop.....	1
Two or more of above causes combined.....	10
Record of causes incomplete.....	3

Total strikes and lockouts.....70

No further report of a character similar to the above will be prepared before the 1917 convention, and detailed data for 1913-1917 will therefore hardly be available for the present thesis.

¹⁰⁸ Exclusive of cases in which the union, after applying for support, dropped the matter, and of cases in which the union failed to report the outcome.

¹⁰⁹ These cases were connected with trivial disputes involving the discharge of one or more unionists, where the national union assisted the discharged members financially, but did not authorize any strikes in their behalf.

5. CONCLUDING NOTE

The results of collective bargaining in the tailoring trade appear in some respects to be disappointing, as compared with the results secured by unions in other trades. It must be recalled, however, that the Tailors' Union has been confronted with a situation in which very numerous handicaps to trade union success have existed. This union has been obliged to face a declining industry, because of the substitution of cheaper systems of producing clothing. These cheaper systems were so organized as to permit of the employment of large numbers of immigrant and women laborers at comparatively low wages. Moreover, as we have seen, the piece system, coupled with the system of taking work to the tailors' homes, under the seasonal conditions of the trade, has prevented in a very large measure the standardization of hours and working conditions. Under all these circumstances, it is surprising that the Tailors have succeeded as well as they have in avoiding utter demoralization of their trade, and we may well question whether, in the absence of that kind of conservative leadership which has been described, the organization could have existed at all.

CHAPTER II

HELPERS AND APPRENTICES

1. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

It has already been pointed out¹ that as a rule, where the journeyman tailor works with help, the help is hired by the journeyman himself, and not by the employer. This system appears to have originated with the taking of work by the journeyman away from the employer's place of business, and has made the problem of assistants in the tailoring trade somewhat different from the same problem in a majority of other trades.²

According to the terminology employed in the trade, tailors' assistants are divided into two classes: (1) helpers, (2) apprentices. The following explanation has been given to the writer by an experienced tailor:³

The difference between a helper and apprentice is that the former only works at the trade temporarily, while the latter learns the trade with the intention of following it as a journeyman or with the intention of later learning cutting, as tailors call it, which includes drafting of a garment before it is cut. Helpers are for the most part females. A young boy starting to work with a journeyman tailor is sometimes called a helper, but they in nearly every case become apprentices, unless they find the trade too onerous and confining and quit learning.

Tailors who come from the countries of Europe learn the trade before coming here. Those who come here do in most instances work for a journeyman tailor as helper for a season or part of one in order to acquire knowledge of the methods used in this country making garments. They, however, are not considered either helpers or apprentices, although called helpers. They are merely learning the details of making a garment; the fundamentals they have already learned. It is not essential that a newcomer

¹ *Supra*, p. 29.

² For a discussion of other trades in which the assistants are, or have been, employed by the journeymen, cf. J. H. Ashworth, *The Helper and American Trade Unions*, in Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series 33, 1915, pp. 68-77.

³ A. T. Carlquist, formerly assistant secretary in the general office of the Journeymen Tailors' Union.

does as above related, but it gives him more confidence in himself to hold a job.

To one not familiar with the tailoring trade, there is no way to distinguish between an apprentice and a helper, but the experienced tailor going into a shop could soon tell which was which by noticing the work they were doing.

It will be observed that the term "apprentice" is here used in the sense of a learner, and not in the sense of a person bound to a master workman for a given period of years.

2. REGULATION OF HELPERS AND APPRENTICES

The regulation of helpers and apprentices by the organized tailors has been recognized as a matter belonging primarily under the jurisdiction of the local unions. Where the national union has passed regulations on this subject, it has intended to prescribe the limits within which local union control should operate, rather than to remove such control altogether.

Regulations on the subject of helpers and apprentices passed by the national union between 1883 and the present date may be classified according to subject matter as follows:

- (1) Eligibility of helpers and apprentices to membership in the union;
- (2) Compulsory admission of helpers and apprentices;
- (3) Standardization of preparation and skill;
- (4) Limitation of the number of helpers and apprentices;
- (5) Duties and privileges of apprentices in local unions;
- (6) Dues of apprentices to the national union.

The regulations will be discussed under the above heads, and then an effort will be made to interpret these regulations with reference to their purpose and significance in the policy of the union.

(1) Eligibility of helpers and apprentices. The 1884, 1885 and 1887 constitutions of the Tailors' Union contained no express provision either for or against the admission of helpers and apprentices to membership, and during this period the matter was entirely under local union regulation. There is evidence, however, that in some localities there was a prejudice against the admission of women to the union, and this would have operated against the admission of women helpers. For example, in 1888 there was a split in the Houston, Texas, local union over

the question of admission of women.⁴ This incident called forth the following comment from the general secretary:⁵

Many tailors will not permit women to belong to their unions. This seems to us to be both unjust and unwise. If they work at the trade they should be in the union and under its control, should pay their dues and fulfill all obligations of full members, and should receive for their work the same pay as men for the same work.

In his report to the 1889 convention⁶ the secretary again recommended that women be made eligible to membership. The convention adopted this recommendation and amended the constitution⁷ so as to provide specifically for the eligibility of journeymen tailors, helpers and apprentices, whether male or female.⁸ Even after the passage of this amendment there seems to have been some discrimination against women members. In his 1891 report⁹ the secretary found it necessary to recommend that women be granted the same protection and benefits under the constitution as men, and that in the case of women helpers, when an advance in wages was received by the union, the helpers should be given their full proportion. The 1891 convention did not approve unqualifiedly this recommendation, but adopted the following report of the committee on officers' reports:¹⁰

Women members: Your committee approves of this section with the exception of women helpers. This question to be left at the discretion of the L. U., and we recommend that this convention does not encourage women helpers.

Following 1891 the prejudice against the admission of women helpers does not appear in any official recommendation, and in 1893, as we shall see, the question was definitely disposed of.

(2) Compulsory admission of helpers and apprentices. Admission of helpers and apprentices to membership remained optional with the local unions until 1893, when the convention pro-

⁴ *The Tailor*, November, 1888, p. 7, col. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *The Tailor*, September, 1889, p. 1.

⁷ Up to and including 1889, the convention had power to amend the constitution without a referendum vote. Following 1889 all amendments were submitted to the membership for approval or rejection.

⁸ *Constitution*, 1889, Art. VI., Sec. 1.

⁹ *The Tailor*, August, 1891, p. 2.

¹⁰ *The Tailor*, August, 1891, p. 3, col. 4, report of committee on officers' reports; p. 4, col. 1, action of convention on 13th and 17th sections.

posed the following amendment, which was approved by referendum vote:¹¹

A candidate to be admitted to membership in the J. T. U. of A. by a L. U. must be a journeyman tailor or tailoress, apprentice or helper, and all apprentices or helpers working with members of the J. T. U. of A. 18 years of age or over must become members.

This section remained the same in effect until 1914,¹² when the age limit was removed, making membership of all helpers compulsory.¹³ In 1902 the journeyman tailor employing the helper or apprentice was made responsible, under penalty of a fine, for seeing that the assistant joined the union,¹⁴ and this provision, with one or two slight modifications,¹⁵ has remained in force until the present date.

(3) Standardization of preparation and skill. In his report to the 1891 convention, Secretary Lennon indicated that "apprentices should not be allowed to work as journeymen until they are really tailors."¹⁶ No definite action, however, on this point was taken until the meeting of the 1897 committee on laws and audit, when the following amendment was proposed, and passed by the membership:¹⁷

Apprentices shall be bound either verbally or by writing as the laws of the various states or provinces may provide, for a period of not less than three years, and a clear book shall not be issued by any L. U. to an apprentice after their time has expired unless their work be acceptable to a committee of the L. U. and if found by the committee as efficient a certificate of efficiency shall be issued to the apprentice over a seal of the local signed by the President and Corresponding Secretary.

¹¹ *Constitution*, 1894, Sec. 26.

¹² *Cf. Constitution*, 1895, Sec. 25; 1896, Sec. 25; 1898, Sec. 32; 1900, Sec. 31; 1902, Sec. 30; 1904, Sec. 34; 1905, Sec. 34; 1908, Sec. 34; 1910, Sec. 33.

¹³ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 33: "All workers must become members." The proposition as submitted to a general vote in 1913 read: "All helpers must become members," and it was passed in this form. The writer is unable to account for the change in wording, unless it was due to the passage of another amendment at the same time, which read: "All help working at the trade for contractors or sub-bosses must become members of the union." *Cf. The Tailor*, September, 1913, p. 6, Proposition No. 12; p. 5, Proposition No. 9; vote, November, 1913, supplement.

¹⁴ *Constitution*, 1902, Sec. 22.

¹⁵ *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 23; 1914, Sec. 12.

¹⁶ *The Tailor*, August, 1891, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Constitution*, 1898, Sec. 23.

This amendment remained in force until 1903, when it was stricken out.¹⁸ In commenting upon the proposal to strike out, the secretary said: "There are no conditions in a legal sense regarding apprentices that warrant the continuance of any such action."¹⁹

(4) Limitation of the number of helpers and apprentices. Prior to 1898 the regulation of the number of helpers and apprentices was left entirely to the local unions. There is no information at hand to indicate to what extent this regulation had gone before this date. An official report in 1889 appears to indicate that in the best class of stores at any rate some effort had been made to limit the number of helpers to one to each journeyman, or even to prohibit helpers altogether.²⁰ In his 1891 report the general secretary said, referring to the subject of apprentices and helpers:²¹

With home work so largely prevalent among tailors, but little control can be had by our union on either subject, but where the unions have the rule in force that all work shall be made on the employers' premises, not more than one helper or apprentice should be allowed to each journeyman.

And in his 1893 report:²²

The limitation of the number of helpers and apprentices should receive your consideration. The present system in some cities is really nothing but the sweating system and should be abolished. Whatever the limit that may be made by this convention, it should be binding on every union, and tailors that wish to be sweaters should get outside the J. T. U. of A.

Neither the 1891 nor the 1893 convention saw fit to enact any legislation on this subject. There was no convention or legisla-

¹⁸ *The Tailor*, September, 1903, p. 2, Proposition No. 5; vote, November, 1903, supplement.

¹⁹ *The Tailor*, September, 1903, p. 5, comment on Proposition No. 5. Cf. the following from Lindley D. Clark, *The Law of the Employment of Labor*, p. 23:

"Practically all the states have laws relating to apprentices and the regulation and enforcement of contracts with them. These laws generally prescribe the term of indenture, the duties of the master as to training, education, and the payment of the stipulated amount on the expiration of the term. . . . These laws are practically obsolete at the present time, contracts between employers and unskilled men or boys learning trades being for the most part governed by the rules of law generally applicable to labor contracts."

²⁰ *The Tailor*, September, 1889, p. 1, report on "Conditions in our trade."

²¹ *The Tailor*, August, 1891, p. 2.

²² *The Tailor*, August, 1893, p. 2.

tive committee meeting between 1893 and 1897, but in 1897 the committee on laws and audit proposed the following amendment, which was approved on referendum vote:²³

Each local union of the J. T. U. of A. shall have power to forbid the employment of any helpers in their respective jurisdictions, but no L. U. shall have power to allow any member to employ more than one helper or one apprentice.

Subsequent legislation by the Tailors' Union on the subject of limiting the number of helpers and apprentices falls into two classes: (a) amendments providing for relaxation of the "one helper rule," on account of the difficulty of enforcing the same in certain localities, resulting finally in the return to the former system of regulation by the local unions; (b) positive legislation designed to prevent, rather than to promote, the limitation by local unions of helpers in localities where such limitation was regarded by the national officials as a handicap to union progress.

The first amendment in the direction of relaxing the one helper limit was passed in 1903, and provided as follows:²⁴

In cities where organizing work is being carried on by the local union or by the general organizers, and conditions existing in the trade in such cities make it impossible to thoroughly organize the craft with the one helper limit, with the consent of the G. E. B. Section 23 can be suspended, in such city until conditions and prices can be so improved as to warrant the enforcement of the one helper limit, and all persons working at the trade in such case shall be eligible to membership.

This section was repealed in 1909, and the following substituted:²⁵

In cities where conditions regarding helpers and apprentices as fixed by the existing L. U. prevent a thorough organization of the trade, the G. E. B. shall have power, if found necessary after a careful investigation, to issue a charter to another L. U.

At the same time the section forbidding local unions to allow more than one helper or one apprentice to each journeyman was repealed, and the matter was left specifically to the control of the local unions.²⁶ Finally, provision was made for the admission of "contractors or sub-bosses" to membership in the national union

²³ *Constitution*, 1898, Sec. 22.

²⁴ *Constitution*, 1904, Sec. 24.

²⁵ *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 24.

²⁶ *The Tailor*, August, 1909, p. 40, Proposition No. 3; *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 23.

as passive members;²⁷ contractors or sub-bosses being defined as tailors employing more than one helper.²⁸ This amendment made it possible for tailors employing more than one helper to secure membership in the national union, even though debarred from membership in the local; thus marking the last step in the reaction from the original limitations. No further changes of an important character were made, except to substitute the word "finishers" for "apprentices" in the section governing helpers and apprentices, making this section read: "helpers and finishers," instead of "helpers and apprentices;" the intention of this change being probably to include apprentices under "helpers," and to make sure that persons employed as finishers would be brought into the union as well as regular helpers.²⁹

The attempt to regulate the number of helpers and apprentices in shops employing the weekly system, where helpers and apprentices are under the control of the employer, took a course similar to that followed in the case of pieceworkers' helpers. An amendment was passed in 1905 providing that "no helpers shall be employed by the men working under the weekly system, and under no consideration shall more than one helper or apprentice be allowed to each man,"³⁰ but this amendment was repealed in 1907.³¹ At present the union exercises only such control over assistants in weekly shops as may be secured locally through agreement with the employer.³²

(5) Duties and privileges of apprentices in local unions. In 1901 an amendment was passed providing that "no regularly bound apprentice shall have a vote upon any administrative question before the local union, nor shall they be required to pay

²⁷ Passive members are allowed to remain in benefit in the national union by paying the national dues and levies, but are debarred from attending local meetings unless requested by the local union, and are excused from payment of local dues. *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 55.

²⁸ *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 56.

²⁹ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 12.

³⁰ *Constitution*, 1905, Sec. 77.

³¹ *The Tailor*, September, 1907, p. 7, Proposition No. 7; vote, November 1907, supplement.

³² For example, in union shops in Seattle employing the weekly system the rule is one apprentice to every twelve employees. *The Tailor*, April 10, 1917, p. 3.

local dues."³³ This was replaced in 1904 by the following:³⁴

It shall be optional with each local union to excuse apprentices and helpers from payment of all or a part of the local dues. Apprentices or helpers shall not have the right to vote on this question.

Changes since 1904 have eliminated this provision, but it is probably held to be included in the following provision of the present law: "All local unions of the J. T. U. of A. shall have the power to regulate the employment of helpers and finishers in their respective jurisdictions."³⁵

(6) Dues of helpers and apprentices to the national union. In 1913 a rule was enacted permitting helpers and apprentices employed at a wage of less than \$12.00 per week to pay 40 cents a month dues to the national union, instead of the regular dues of 65 cents a month, provided they would waive the sick and death benefits.³⁶ This amendment was significant mainly as an incident to the effort to establish an industrial union, and will be discussed in that connection.³⁷

3. INTERPRETATION OF UNION REGULATIONS

In endeavoring to interpret the regulations of the Tailors' Union on the subject of helpers and apprentices, it is necessary, first, to indicate the purposes served, or intended to be served, by the regulations as first passed; and second, to account for the retrograde movement, by which practically all regulation on the part of the national union was abandoned.

The purposes of the regulations passed by the national union seem to have been principally the following:

(1) To standardize preparation for the tailoring trade, and prevent imperfectly trained workers from posing as skilled journeymen;

(2) To avoid a surplus of journeymen tailors by limiting the number of learners;

(3) To prevent a reduction of the demand for skilled men on account of their work being done by helpers; or, what amounts to the same thing economically, to prevent journeymen taking

³³ *Constitution*, 1902, Sec. 23.

³⁴ *Constitution*, 1904, Sec. 14.

³⁵ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 12.

³⁶ *Constitution*, 1914, Sec. 25.

³⁷ *Cf. infra*, pp. 103-104.

advantage of one another by employing a number of helpers and getting more than their "share" of the work;

(4) To oblige helpers and apprentices to assume union obligations, since indirectly they profited by union conditions;

(5) To educate helpers and apprentices in union principles, and prevent their acting against the union in strikes.

Since some of the regulations had more than one purpose, and some of the purposes named were served by more than one regulation, it would be cumbersome to relate the regulations to their purposes in complete detail. We shall endeavor to indicate only the more important connections, leaving the reader to supply the others for himself:

(1) To standardize preparation for the tailoring trade. It has already been noted that an effort was made to accomplish this object by coöperation with state laws designed to fit the old systems of indentures and fixed terms of apprenticeship, and that this effort was abandoned on account of the obsolescence of the old legal system. At the present time there is no standardization except that which is imposed by the merchant tailor or cutter,³⁸ and as a result standards of skill in the tailoring trade have been very considerably demoralized.

(2) To avoid a surplus of journeymen tailors by limiting the number of learners. In this connection the rule should be recalled which was in force for a time, whereby only one apprentice or one helper was allowed to each journeyman. While there were other reasons for the limitation to one helper, which we shall consider shortly, the fact that the helper was a potential apprentice made the limitation of helpers as well as the limitation of apprentices desirable for the purpose that we are now considering. However, in the writer's opinion, the rules of the union have been far less potent than other causes in bringing about the limitation of the number of apprentices.³⁹ These

³⁸ "There is no system of examination of apprentices in tailoring, except that one must be competent to make a garment in accord with the ideas of the cutter or the boss, either of whom does the examining after the job is finished. That is examination enough. No two cutters have the same ideas as to details of the making of a job." A. T. Carlquist, correspondence, November 5, 1916.

³⁹ As far as we can discover, the number of apprentices actually learning the trade with union men has been published on only two dates, August,

other causes will be considered in the last section of this chapter, in connection with the present shortage of skilled tailors.

(3) To prevent a reduction of the demand for skilled men on account of their work being done by helpers; to prevent journeymen taking advantage of one another by employing a number of helpers and getting more than their "share" of the work.

These two objects are discussed together, for the reason that they are not economically distinct, and together they constituted the principal motive for limitation of the number of helpers. The literature of the Tailors' Union contains many interesting accounts of the conditions which led to the attempt at this kind of limitation. The following extract indicates the situation in certain large cities in 1891, as indicated by reports of union organizers:⁴⁰

As we were going from house to house to see the tailors for the purpose of getting them to join the union, we met some that were more than willing to join, but, they said, we have not done anything for six weeks, so you see that it is impossible for us to join at the present time.

Others we saw at different times that worked for the same firms, who were busy when we called on them; yes, they had three or four coats all the time, and some of them had their wives, sisters-in-law, and three helpers, helping them.

Now, if the principles of union were enforced in this case, this would not be, for they would all receive work.

It also happens that during the dull season a suit of clothes must be done on short notice, so the one that has the helpers will get the job. This could also be done away with if we had the back-shops, for then two or three good men would have a chance to work a day or two.

In the city of Cincinnati, there is one vest maker, who has eight helpers, who make one hundred and ten vests a week, and in Cleveland there is a pants maker, who with thirteen helpers, working for seven different firms,

1903, and January, 1912. On the first date, Secretary Lennon, basing his statement on the returns from a questionnaire sent out to local unions, reported that there were approximately 625 apprentices learning the trade with union men within the jurisdiction of the Tailors' Union. The total membership of the union at this date was about 14,500. This indicated an average of about one apprentice to every 23 members. In January, 1912, returns from a questionnaire sent out by the writer indicated that with 5,323 members reporting (about 40 per cent of the entire membership at this date), there were 180 apprentices, or about one to every thirty members. Cf. *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 5; Stowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-155, 158.

⁴⁰ *The Tailor*, July, 1891, p. 5, col. 4, article on "How to organize the tailors," by M. Bantz, organizer.

turns out one hundred and forty-five to fifty pair of pants a week. Now if this work were done by practical tailors, it would give in the former case employment to sixteen, and in the latter to twenty-six men.

The exploitation of female labor at about the same date is indicated by the following:⁴¹

The employment of female help is not necessarily an evil if limited to one help, but the selfishness and greed of many has led to its abuse, and it is a well-known fact, more particularly in pants making, one man runs a little factory by employing as many as four and six girls. The man who employs them is making money out of them.

Finally, we quote an article from a Chicago tailor, indicating conditions in that city in 1892:⁴²

Custom tailoring is manipulated at present in a way that can safely be classed in the sweating system. In Chicago there are a great number of even union tailors who employ helpers in their private homes, or in places engaged for the purpose of manufacturing custom tailoring garments, and the old custom of applying individual artistic labor in the production of fine tailoring is being more and more pushed to the wall, and consequently made unprofitable to those engaged therein, by the other method of working in gangs, with trimmers, machine operators, pressers and finishers.

There is in Chicago a manifest tendency towards this, especially so in the making of trousers and vests. From personal observation I know that only about five per cent of trousers makers in Chicago are actually engaged in the making to completion, in every detail of the work, the above mentioned garment. This is even more so in the vest making line, I can safely say, not having found in ten years as many as twelve vest makers who individually completed their job; in passing, I will remark that this holds only good where the question is about men. Women vest makers do, as a rule, work single-handed; only a few of them have I seen to employ helpers on any large scale worth mentioning. Coat making in fine tailoring is practised in the same way, if not in so great proportion; as in this line, it appears, a man is guaranteed better and steadier wages, even if he is working single handed, than in the vest and trousers department of the trade. Notwithstanding this a great number of our union coatmakers do employ helpers; even two helpers are found working for union men in direct opposition to our local constitution, that prohibits this same; and, judging from appearances, it is safe to predict that time will come in the near future when it will be possible to manufacture fine coats on a large scale and still give satisfaction to the trade in regard to superior workmanship, just as much as when you today give the making of a dress coat into the hands of a journeyman tailor and rely on his individual accomplishments as an artist in finishing the garment.

⁴¹ *The Tailor*, September, 1891, p. 1, col. 2. Article on "The eight hour question as applied to tailoring," by Alex S. Drummond.

⁴² *The Tailor*, May, 1892, p. 3, col. 1, article by P. Ewald Jensen.

These extracts, selected at about the date when agitation by the officials of the national union on the helper question was becoming active,⁴³ tell their own story with reference to the conditions which it was hoped to remedy. The regulations by which this object was to be accomplished have already been discussed. The backward movement, by which the attempt to limit helpers by regulations on the part of the national union was abandoned, was due to reasons which again may best be indicated by the union writers themselves. As early as 1889 Secretary Lennon recognized the difficulty of enforcing any limitation of helpers in what was known as the cheap custom trade.⁴⁴ When, however, the Garment Workers' Union was organized, and this union began to organize cheap custom tailoring, as well as the ready-made clothing trade, Mr. Lennon appears to have resumed the effort for limitation of helpers in his own union by national regulation, believing no doubt that it could be done in the better class of trade, to which, more and more, the Journeymen Tailors' Union was confining itself.⁴⁵

It will be recalled that the one helper limit by enactment of the national union was in force without qualification from 1898 to 1903. The following letter, which was addressed to the committee on laws and audit in 1903 by Organizer Carlquist, appears to have had an influence in the direction of relaxing the one helper rule:⁴⁶

Owing to certain peculiar features which I have encountered in connection with our craft in the cities of New England which I have visited, notably so Boston and Providence, I take liberty of calling your attention particularly to the feature of helpers. My experience in the city of Boston

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁴ "My attention has been most forcibly called to the fact of the constantly increasing amount of cheap custom tailoring that is being done in every city of the country, and to the very alarming fact in connection therewith, that such work is not being made by our members, but by persons who are usually not tailors at all. . . . While in the fine stores of the country it is entirely practical to limit our members to one helper, or even none at all, in the making of this cheap custom work it appears to me that such limitation is suicidal to the journeyman tailor, and deprives him of work that should be made by him, but is now made by persons who have really no skill as tailors." *The Tailor*, September, 1889, p. 1, col. 4.

⁴⁵ The question of trade union jurisdiction over different branches of the clothing trade will be discussed more fully in Ch. III.

⁴⁶ *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 8.

teaches, yes, convinces me, that in order to more thoroughly organize our craft in places where the journeymen employ more than one helper it will be necessary to take in such journeymen as well as their helpers. . . . The question of more than one helper exists in many places to a greater or less extent. The question then arises: Is the J. T. U. of A. strong and influential enough to do away with this system of more than one helper? We must confess our weakness that we cannot. That system exists and is going to exist whether we as an organization refuse to take such people into our union or not. Certain it is, however, that were the laws on that subject amended so that we could admit them to membership, I am positive that that evil, as we journeymen look upon it, could be better regulated. . . . For us to frown upon that portion of the journeymen who employ more than one helper is not going to remedy the evil, neither will it do us any good to call them "sweaters." They will keep on "sweating" in spite of us, and so long as they are outside of our organization they are a worse menace to us than if we had them in our organization.

The committee approved in essence the ideas set forth in the above letter,⁴⁷ and proposed the amendment already noted, whereby the one helper rule might be suspended at the discretion of the General Executive Board.⁴⁸ The further relaxation of the one helper rule and its final elimination appear to have been dictated by similar considerations.⁴⁹

It must not be supposed that the removal of restrictions on the part of the national union put a stop to the regulation of helpers and apprentices by the local unions. An inquiry in 1911 indicated that of sixty-seven unions reporting: "Six unions stated that no helpers were employed by their members; twenty-five unions had no rule on the subject; ten unions had a rule that no helpers should be employed; twenty-three unions permitted one helper only to each journeyman; two unions permitted not more than two helpers to each journeyman; one union permitted 'one helper to each shop.'"⁵⁰

(4) To oblige helpers and apprentices to assume union obligations, since indirectly they profit by union conditions.

(5) To educate helpers and apprentices in union principles, and prevent their acting against the union in strikes.

These two purposes gave the principal motives for admitting helpers and apprentices to membership, and later insisting upon

⁴⁷ *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 16, col. 2.

⁴⁸ *Supra*, p. 70.

⁴⁹ *The Tailor*, September, 1909, p. 1, comment on Proposition No. 3.

⁵⁰ Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

their admission, under the rules already indicated.⁵¹ The placing of the age limit at eighteen years appears to have been based upon three ideas: (1) that the helper who has reached this age is sufficiently mature to undertake union responsibilities; (2) that women helpers of this age have reached their legal majority; (3) that by this age apprentices should have learned the elements of the trade, and both for their own benefit and for the protection of the union should be under union control.

The regulations concerning the local dues and privileges of apprentices and helpers⁵² are passed over as comparatively insignificant in the policy of the national union.

4 PRESENT CONDITIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE SUPPLY OF SKILLED TAILORS

It is difficult to ascertain the facts with reference to the present supply of tailors. It seems to be admitted both by employers and employees that there is a real scarcity of skilled journeymen capable of doing the highest grade of work. From the literature of employers it would be inferred that there is a scarcity of tailors in general, while in the literature of the Tailors' Union frequent reference is made to a condition where there are "two tailors for every job." The confusion on this subject arises no doubt in part from the different viewpoints of the several observers, some having an eye to the fact that in the rush seasons it would frequently be convenient for the boss to have a larger force of journeymen, while others are thinking of the condition in the slack seasons, when there are not only two, but several, journeymen to each job. A reasonable conclusion, in view of all the information in the writer's possession, appears to be that there is an actual scarcity of skilled tailors of the highest competency and skill, although there are a considerable number of mediocre workers parading as tailors, including many who have learned the trade somewhat imperfectly abroad. Accepting this conclusion, we proceed to consider the causes of the scarcity of skilled workers.

Here again we find differences of opinion and a considerable variety of alleged causes advanced. In "A Series of Papers on

⁵¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 66-68.

⁵² Cf. *supra*, p. 72.

the Journeyman Tailor Problem," published by *The American Gentleman*, a fashion journal,⁵³ the following causes are alleged as contributing to the scarcity of skilled journeymen tailors:

The best journeymen leave the trade to become cutters or merchant tailors, or to accept good positions with ready-made clothing factories.

The system of specialized or "sectional" work on the cheaper class of tailoring does not require highly skilled workers.

Immigrant tailors now come from less competent and intelligent races than formerly.

The tailoring trade is not recognized as an art, as it should be, and therefore is not attractive to possible learners.

The old apprenticeship system has disappeared, largely on account of the invention of the sewing machine.

The tailoring trade has a bad reputation abroad, especially in the British Isles; the trade is taught mainly in charitable institutions, and is considered to be "no good except for cripples and women."

The Journeymen Tailors' Union of America has placed obstacles in the way of learners acquiring the tailoring trade.

Journeymen tailors employed on piece work have not time to teach apprentices.

Apprentices rise from the position of helpers, and are imperfectly trained; journeymen do not teach them the whole trade for fear of losing a good helper.

There is no chance for a boy to learn the tailoring trade in school vacations; journeymen will not take boys for three months only.

Apprentices are taught mainly by journeymen employed in the cheaper trade; journeymen in the fine trade will not take the trouble to instruct apprentices; apprentices instructed in the cheaper trade cannot fill positions in first-class shops.

The merchant tailor who does not have his work made in his own shop has nobody with whom to place apprentices.

⁵³ This series consists of twelve articles reprinted from the November and December, 1910, and February, 1911, numbers of the journal. These articles were brought out by a prize essay contest. The articles are not signed, but from their tenor it is evident that the writers included journeymen tailors as well as employers and cutters.

Young men are prejudiced against the tailoring trade, as compared with other trades, on account of:

- (a) Long hours and irregular seasons;
- (b) The long period of apprenticeship (two to five years);
- (c) The low wages of apprentices;
- (d) The low wages of journeymen;
- (e) Lack of clean and sanitary shops;
- (f) Failure of employers to furnish shops at all in some localities, necessitating home work or payment of shop rent;
- (g) Employment of women; boys do not want to take up "women's work;"
- (h) Disadvantages of the piecework system;
- (i) Second-class workers can make as much as first-class workers by taking less pains and working faster.

The remedies suggested in the same series of papers are equally diverse:

Establish the sectional system of production. Let several merchant tailors unite to furnish a large workshop.

Establish trade schools, either under public or private control. Publish text-books on the tailoring trade.

Admit apprentices to instruction in first-class shops at fair wages.

Employ journeymen by the week.

Employ journeymen by the year, like a cutter; regularize hours.

Furnish free shops for the journeymen. Improve sanitation and other conditions in all shops.

Give good workmen recognition for their skill; pay fair wages.

Improve the personal treatment of journeymen by employers and cutters; do not ask journeymen to make alterations without extra pay on account of cutters' mistakes.

Let cutters' associations and journeymen tailors' unions hold joint meetings and discuss the improvement of the trade.

If skilled journeymen cannot be obtained, employ women to do all of the work except the heavy pressing.

As would be expected, the journeymen tailors allege in explanation of the scarcity of apprentices those causes connected with unfavorable conditions in the trade, and are inclined to favor those remedies which have to do with the improvement of conditions. The employers, while by no means indifferent to the necessity for improved conditions, still adhere to the theory that apprenticeship is being restricted by the rules of the tailors' un-

ions and by the tacit disinclination of journeymen to teach apprentices. The favorite remedy of employers for the situation is the establishment of trade schools. The journeymen deny strenuously that apprenticeship is being held back by the rules of their unions, and point out that for reasons altogether independent of their rules the number of apprentices is seldom up to the number allowed by the unions. On the subject of the education of apprentices, Secretary Lennon was accustomed to make a distinction between "trade schools" and "industrial education." Commenting upon a plan for the establishment of trade schools by an association of merchant tailors he said:⁵⁴

We feel sure that the merchant tailors must understand the distinction between industrial education and trade schools. Industrial education means the development of high class workmen. Trade schools mean, and have never meant anything else, the turning out of a lot of cheap skates industrially that could accomplish nothing as workmen and were only a menace to the business. In Munich where industrial education has reached its highest development and its greatest degree of efficiency, the trade schools - if they may be called that at all - are merely an adjunct to the general education of the workman or apprentice. Trade schools in the tailoring business have already been tried in this country. And in every case they have been failures absolutely and totally; didn't turn out mechanics, and in the next place, they couldn't get material in the shape of boys from which to make mechanics, or girls either. And they can't obtain them now, and these merchant tailors, if they had studied industrial conditions even superficially, must know that this statement is absolutely true. Conditions in our trade are the thing that prevents the boys and girls from entering it. And until those conditions are changed there will be no influx of boys and girls into the custom tailoring industry.

We may conclude that for a time the tailoring trade will be obliged to rely very largely upon the immigration of foreign-trained tailors for its supply of workmen, but that eventually a system of vocational education will be perfected which will create real mechanics. In the meanwhile, the number of skilled tailors of the old type required will become less and less, as the new systems of subdividing the work increase, and it is probable that in the long run the employment of skilled hand-workers, capable of making an entire garment, will cease, except in the very finest stores.

⁵⁴ *The Tailor*, January, 1910, p. 20. For other articles on the question of apprenticeship, see *The Tailor*, April, 1910, pp. 4, 16; May, 1910, p. 17; January 23, 1917, p. 3.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS OF JURISDICTION AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARD INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

In a previous monograph ¹ an account was given of the rise of the tailoring trade in America, and a brief résumé of this account is necessary at this point. For the first two centuries following colonization, the tailoring industry in this country was occupied chiefly with custom work for wealthy patrons, together with a small amount of ready-made clothing, hand-sewed, for Indians, negroes and sailors. The invention of the sewing machine in 1846 marked a great change. Following this date the ready-made clothing industry increased rapidly, and soon became a formidable competitor to the older system of custom work, or work made to the order and measure of each individual customer. To meet this competition merchants and employees in the custom trade were obliged to cheapen production by having a part of the work on custom suits done by machine. As a result the machines were introduced into shops and homes, and the skilled tailors began to employ more extensively members of their own families or outside helpers, usually women, to do the finishing work.

The past thirty years has witnessed a very great improvement in the quality of ready-made clothing, and the old-style merchant tailoring business has suffered a corresponding decline. This result has been accelerated by the rise of new systems of production, whereby the methods of the ready-made clothing industry have been applied to the manufacture of clothing to measure. Custom tailoring done in factories is generally known as "special order" trade, and has entered into competition principally with

¹ Stowell, *Studies in Trade Unionism in the Custom Tailoring Trade*, pp. 16-32; 42-75.

the cheaper grade of custom tailoring done on the old system.² However, in recent years new methods have grown up for making also the finer grades of clothing, on what is known as a "sectional" or "team" system, whereby the work on a garment will be systematized and passed through several hands, employing only as much skilled help as is absolutely necessary.³ The result is that we have today a very great variety in the methods and quality of custom tailoring, ranging from the cheapest machine work to the most artistic and expensive suit turned out by the fine stores in the cities.

The early societies mentioned in the historical sketch in the Introduction were composed of custom tailors, hand workers, together with their apprentices and helpers. The jurisdictional questions which are to engage our attention in this chapter had not yet arisen. While the ready-made clothing industry existed during the period from 1725⁴ to 1880, movements toward the organization of the workers in this industry were insignificant, and there was little opportunity for clash of jurisdiction with the custom branch. In fact, it was not until the period of organization of national unions that the jurisdiction question became prominent.

In 1883, when the present national union of journeymen tailors was founded, the workers on ready-made clothing were known as "shop tailors." At this time there was no national union composed exclusively of shop tailors, although some local societies were forming. There was a national organization known as the "Tailors' Progressive Union of America,"⁵ which contained both custom tailors and shop tailors, the shop tailors, however, being in the majority. The Knights of Labor also contained some assemblies of tailors, including both custom tailors and shop tailors.⁶ Finally, one or two unions of shop tailors became affiliated with the Journeymen Tailors' organization. It

² Even cheap custom tailoring done by the piece on a sub-contracting or "sweating" system has found it difficult to compete with the factory work.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 51.

⁴ Miss Sumner sets 1725 as the date of the beginning of the ready-made clothing industry in America. Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 20, and note 36.

⁵ Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 66, and note 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68, and note 115.

should be understood that at this time (1883-1891) the shop tailoring or ready-made clothing industry was not sharply separated from the custom tailoring industry, either with reference to the places of business or with reference to the people who carried on these industries. It was a fact deplored by Secretary Lennon of the custom tailors that the members of his craft were contributing to the destruction of their own occupation by working on ready-made clothing in the dull seasons.⁷ Mr. Lennon as editor of the custom tailors' journal expressed himself repeatedly in favor of a single organization to include both custom tailors and shop tailors.⁸ The official organ of the Progressive Union was also in favor of a single organization, which would involve an amalgamation of the Progressive Union with the Journeymen Tailors' Union.⁹ The arguments advanced in favor of amalgamation were as follows: (1) Organizations should concentrate power as much as possible, instead of wasting it fighting each other; (2) amalgamation would have an "animating effect" upon the individual tailors and local unions that had not yet joined the nationals; "the usual excuse, that they do not know what organization to join, would be impossible;" (3) the consolidated organization would have sufficient power to bring in those assemblies affiliated with the Knights of Labor; (4) the bosses would respect the united union more than the divided ones; (5) the expense of administration would be less; (6) the influence of the union label could be extended.¹⁰

In favor of the general proposition to bring shop tailors into

7 "I am well aware of the fact that there are now in New York City several large ready-made firms who pride themselves on the fine quality of their work; who hold back for the dull season with the custom tailors very much of their best trade, knowing full well that they can get plenty of good tailors to make it. To the credit of many custom tailors it can be said that they have at all times and under all circumstances refused to be the tools to cut their own throats, and what a pity that it could not be said of all." *The Tailor*, September, 1889, p. 7.

⁸ Editorials in *The Tailor*, January, 1888, p. 4; May, 1888, p. 7; June, 1888, p. 4; December, 1888, p. 5, on "Unity Among the Tailors."

⁹ *The Tailor*, December, 1888, p. 5, article "Regarding the Amalgamation of the Tailors' Unions," reprinted from *Progress*, official organ of the Tailors' Progressive Union of America.

¹⁰ The Progressive Union had adopted a label, which was recognized by the American Federation of Labor in 1887 for use on ready-made clothing, but the Journeymen Tailors' Union did not adopt a label until about 1891.

the custom tailors' union, it was pointed out that shop tailors were doing the work of custom tailors during strikes, and that it would be necessary to secure control over the shop tailors before anything could be accomplished in the industry at large.¹¹

There were some obstacles in the way of amalgamating the Progressive Union and the Journeymen Tailors' Union, as a majority of the "Progressives" were outspoken Socialists, while the majority of the Journeymen Tailors were more conservative along political lines. The "Progressives" claimed that the skilled journeymen tailors were opposed to progressive ideas on account of their better economic situation, but expressed the hope that "even these will awaken from their sleep."¹²

¹¹ An excellent description of the situation in the clothing trade is afforded by the following passage, describing the experience of a committee of the custom tailors' union in attempting to prevent a reduction of wages in first-class houses:

"The main argument of the bosses was that the second-class houses were of too great a competition to them, as they sold the same goods at lower prices. We were asked to either accept the reduction or to charge the second-class houses higher rates. We parted, giving the assurance to try to enforce the latter proposition. The second-class houses acknowledged selling goods of equal quality as did the first-class houses, but stated further that, if they had to pay the same prices, their customers would patronize third-class houses and consequently neither they themselves nor we would draw any benefit from such action. We were determined to fulfill our mission, and, in order to place the lever on the right spot, we called on the third-class houses. They also saw the disagreeableness of the present state of affairs, but could under no consideration pay any higher prices, for, the gentlemen explained, if we have to pay more, we will also have to charge more, and the effect will be that our customers - to a great extent laborers - will buy ready-made goods. The extremely low prices for ready-made clothing forces upon them a competition which they can meet only with the greatest carefulness, or else they will have to close up shop. . . . It must be accredited to our stupidity that we are, by a raise of wages, about to saw off the branch upon which we are sitting, for we are driving off our customers to a sphere where we can exert no influence nor have any control over them . . . what we can and must do is to *bring all the workers of our trade under our control*. This is the point where the lever must be applied if we expect to see any results at all; every other exertion is more or less of a subordinate nature." From "Reform Measures - III," by an unknown writer signed "F.F."; possibly the secretary of the Syracuse, N. Y., union, who had the same initials. *The Tailor*, June, 1889, p. 1.

¹² *The Tailor*, December, 1888, p. 5, article from *Progress*. Cf. note 9, p. 84.

Desultory efforts to bring all of the tailors into one organization continued during the years from 1888 to 1891. In 1891 a conference of shop tailors met in New York City, and expressed a desire to join the Journeymen Tailors' Union. When, however, this action was presented to the Executive Board of the Journeymen Tailors, they refused to admit the shop tailors or ready-made clothing workers, the principal reasons apparently being a feeling of trade caste and a fear that in some way the decline of merchant tailoring would be hastened if the skilled workers allowed the cheaper workers to join their union.¹³ As a result, in 1891, the ready-made clothing workers started a union of their own, under the name of "The United Garment Workers of America," and received a charter from the American Federation of Labor.¹⁴ Later, in 1900, the workers on ready-made clothing for women organized a separate national union, known as the "International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union." At this stage, therefore, there were three organizations in the tailoring industry which were recognized by the American Federation of Labor: the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America, controlling custom work; the United Garment Workers of America, controlling principally work on men's ready-made clothing; and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, controlling work on women's ready-made clothing.

The first clash of jurisdiction between the Journeymen Tailors' Union and the United Garment Workers grew out of the system, to which attention has already been called, of manufacturing custom-made clothing in factories. While the greatest development of this system has been comparatively recent, it was beginning to command attention early in the history of the present national union.¹⁵ In 1896 an issue was raised between

¹³ It has been necessary to rely upon former Secretary Lennon for the details of this conference, as it was not reported in the minutes of the Executive Board.

¹⁴ The Tailors' Progressive Union does not appear to have been important after 1889. Cf. Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 66, note 112.

¹⁵ "Industrial changes are gradually coming into our trade; division and subdivision of labor is steadily advancing in the making of clothes; the tailors must take advantage of the new conditions for their own benefit, or the new methods will leave them in the rear idly waiting, while people who are not tailors will, under the new system, make the trade. We must reason

the two national unions concerned by an attempt on the part of a firm named the M. M. Jacobs Company of Chicago to use the Garment Workers' label on work made to measure under a factory system.¹⁶ There appeared to be a lack of agreement among the custom tailors themselves as to which union should control this class of firms. As early as 1892 Secretary Lennon of the Journeymen Tailors' Union had expressed himself favorable to organizing the factory work or "cheap trade," as it was called,¹⁷ and a little later had indicated his belief that the first-class merchant tailors and their employees were making a mistake by opposing the organization of the cheaper firms.¹⁸ The controversy over the Jacobs firm in 1896 made it evident that some kind of an agreement would have to be reached between the Garment Workers and the Tailors with reference to these firms. Accordingly, the Tailors' delegates to the 1896 convention of the American Federation of Labor were instructed by their Executive Board to ask for the adoption of the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, The jurisdiction of the J. T. U. of A. and the United Garment Workers of America has been, and is, by a considerable part of organized

together as to what can, and what should be done. Indifference is suicidal." *The Tailor*, October, 1891, p. 4, editorial.

¹⁶ This firm was established by some union garment workers who had been blacklisted by the employers following a strike in Chicago, and who had gone into business for themselves. *The Tailor*, July, 1896, p. 8.

¹⁷ "The cheap trade is each day making greater inroads into the fine merchant tailoring, and for that reason the tailors employed in the cheap trade must be organized and lifted up, or they will surely pull down the fine tailors." *The Tailor*, February, 1892, editorial.

¹⁸ "In several cities our unions are having some difficulty in handling the very cheap trades, as many of our members and many merchant tailors of the first class object to the cheap trades being recognized as tailoring at all. We believe this view to be wrong. They are in the trade, and in to stay, and will do less harm organized than unorganized." *The Tailor*, January, 1893, p. 4.

It is interesting to note that the Garment Workers' journal was opposed to the new systems of tailoring, claiming that the "special order" work was "a shrewd dodge for the purpose of deceiving the customer into the belief that he is obtaining custom work at ready-made prices." See article, "Cheap Custom Work a Deception," *The Tailor*, November, 1895, p. 6, reprinted from *The Garment Worker*. To understand this attitude of the Garment Workers it is necessary to recall that the cheap custom trade was taking away patronage from the ready-made clothing houses, as well as from the fine merchant tailors.

labor misunderstood, and in consequence thereof misunderstandings have occurred, and charters have been granted by one of the above unions to workers who were really under the jurisdiction of the other one, therefore

Resolved, By the American Federation of Labor in convention assembled, that we hereby recognize as the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of the J. T. U. of A. all custom tailors in the employ of merchant tailors in the United States and Canada, and the label of the J. T. U. of A. shall be the only label recognized as guaranteeing custom tailoring to be union made; and further

Resolved, That we recognize the United Garment Workers of America as having sole and exclusive jurisdiction over all workers in the manufacture of all clothing other than custom-made, as defined by these resolutions, and the label of the U. G. W. of A. shall be the only label recognized as guaranteeing such clothing to be union made.

Resolved, That the designation (merchant tailors) in these resolutions shall be construed to mean all establishments where custom tailoring is made to the measure and to the order of each individual customer.

These resolutions were adopted by the American Federation of Labor, and became the basis of demarcation between the Journeymen Tailors' Union and the United Garment Workers.¹⁹ Shortly afterward the Tailors issued a manifesto in their official journal, advising the local unions to insist strictly upon their right to organize all work made to measure, and to report promptly all infringements.²⁰

In order to bring their constitution into accord with the action of the American Federation of Labor, the Tailors, through their committee on laws and audit, which met in August, 1897, submitted to their membership an amendment which would admit to membership workers on cheap custom tailoring.²¹ This amend-

¹⁹ *The Tailor*, December, 1896, p. 7, Proceedings of the General Executive Board; January, 1897, p. 8.

²⁰ *The Tailor*, June, 1897, p. 8.

²¹ *The Tailor*, August, 1897, p. 16, Proposition 1. Prior to 1897 there was no provision in the constitution of the Journeymen Tailors' Union for the admission to membership of any but journeymen tailors, their apprentices and helpers. The 1884, 1885, and 1887 constitution contained no express provision regarding jurisdiction or eligibility of members, except such as might be implied from the title, "Journeymen Tailors' Union." Express provisions confining eligibility to journeymen tailors, apprentices and helpers are found in the following constitutions and sections: 1889, Art. VI, Sec. 1; 1892, Sec. 21; 1894, Sec. 26; 1895, Sec. 25; 1896, Sec. 25. The term "journeyman tailor," as used in these constitutions, applied to skilled workers employed by regular merchant tailors doing a local business, and

ment was adopted by a vote of 2,133 to 233,²² and was embodied in the constitution in a section reading as follows:²³

The jurisdiction of the J. T. U. of A. shall be the United States and Canada, covering all tailors, helpers, apprentices and workers engaged in the production of custom made clothing (custom made clothing to be interpreted as all clothing made to the order and measure of each individual customer).

Although the amendment had been passed by a large majority, evidently its significance had not been fully realized by all of the members, for as soon as an effort was made to put it into effect, and certain "special order" firms, such as the Globe Tailoring Company, Nicoll the Tailor, and J. W. Losse²⁴ made application to have their establishments organized under the jurisdiction of the J. T. U. of A., protests arose from members in several localities.²⁵ These members feared that if firms of this type, located principally in the larger cities, were allowed to use the Journeymen Tailors' label, their agents would soon overrun the smaller towns where the journeymen tailors were employed, advertising their cheap goods as union-made, and injuring seriously the local trade. On the other hand, the supporters of the amendment, including the general secretary and the General Executive Board, argued that if the special order workers were not organized by the Journeymen Tailors' Union, they would be organized by the

did not apply to tailors employed by factories doing a "special order" or agency business, even though to the order and measure of customers.

²² *The Tailor*, November, 1897, p. 8, vote on Proposition No. 1.

²³ *Constitution*, 1898, Sec. 2.

²⁴ The firm of J. W. Losse in St. Louis did a large agency business in the western states. In 1892 it was running under a team system, each team being in charge of a contractor. The local union of journeymen tailors in St. Louis induced the proprietor to abolish the contract system and to establish a union shop, in order to obtain the use of the union label. Later, apparently, the same firm fell out of the good graces of the union, for a boycott against it is advertised in several issues of the Tailors' journal in 1895 and 1896. See November, 1895, p. 9; December, 1895, p. 8; February, 1896, p. 9.

²⁵ See, for example, letter of F. Gessinger from Delano, Texas, in *The Tailor*, September, 1901, pp. 6-7. This member complains that the state of Texas is full of agents "who know absolutely nothing about tailoring but being slick talkers, they make many people believe that a tailor who charges them \$30 or \$35 for a suit is robbing them and that they can furnish as good a one for \$15, etc."

Garment Workers, and in this case the Tailors' Union would have no control over the conditions under which the cheaper garments were produced, and therefore no opportunity to reduce the effects of their competition. However, as the matter appeared to be causing a real controversy among the members, it was decided by the General Executive Board to resubmit the matter to a general vote. It was found that in addition to the constitutional section governing jurisdiction, there was another section vitally concerned with the matter at issue, which read as follows:

Sec. 169. (1898) The label shall not be used in the United States on any overcoat sold below \$22, or suit below \$22, or trousers below \$5; or in Canada on overcoats sold below \$15, suits below \$15, or trousers below \$3.50, or where the scale of prices for making is per hour in the United States below 20 cents, or in Canada below 15 cents.

In order to make it possible, in case the admission of special order workers should be approved, to use the Tailors' label on their work, regardless of the price at which the garments were sold, but at the same time to encourage a good scale of wages and the furnishing of suitable shops by the employers, the Executive Board recommended the following as a substitute for the section quoted above:

The label shall not be used in the United States on garments made for any firm where the scale of prices averages below twenty cents per hour, or in Canada where the scale paid averages below fifteen cents per hour. Nor shall the label be placed on any garment made outside of back-shops furnished free by the employers.

A vote was therefore called for (1) upon the question of organizing the workers on cheap custom trade; (2) upon the question of adopting the new Sec. 169 as proposed by the Board.²⁶ The result of the vote was as follows:²⁷

In favor of organizing cheap custom trade.....	905
Against organizing cheap custom trade.....	1,695
In favor of new Sec. 169.....	1,104
Against new Sec. 169.....	1,454

Both propositions, therefore, were defeated.

Referring to the first proposition, as the most important, we find that an intelligent analysis of the vote is somewhat difficult,

²⁶ *The Tailor*, January, 1899, p. 9, Proceedings of the General Executive Board; February, 1899, p. 8, editorial; February, 1899, pp. 12-13, official notice calling for vote.

²⁷ *The Tailor*, March, 1899, p. 13.

as the vote did not appear to follow consistently any territorial lines nor any distinction between large and small cities. It is true that the large cities (over 100,000 population) gave a much smaller majority against the proposition than the smaller cities, but if the vote of Chicago, which was almost unanimous in favor of the proposition,²⁸ is eliminated, the large cities show a strong majority against the proposition.²⁹ It seems certain that the feeling of protest which we have described especially with reference to the smaller cities was not by any means confined to these cities, but was more or less general, involving not only a fear of the competition of the cheaper trade, but also a distinct prejudice against it on account of trade caste. This prejudice, which was first noted in connection with the efforts of the shop tailors to secure entrance to the custom tailors' union,³⁰ appears to have operated all through the history of the votes on the jurisdictional question.

Commenting on the vote, the general secretary wrote:³¹

We are now in a position where we can withdraw all claims to jurisdiction over this class of trade, and either the Garment Workers can take up their organization, or as there are not less than 50,000 of such workers in

²⁸ In explanation of the strong vote of the Chicago union (379 to 1) in favor of the proposition, it should be noted that the Chicago union has usually been a strong supporter of the ideas represented by the Lennon administration. This union is one of the older unions and has been disposed toward a well-disciplined and conservative line of action.

²⁹ Twenty-seven cities of more than 100,000 population, including Chicago, gave the following vote: Yes, 635; No, 708. The same cities, except Chicago, gave Yes, 256; No, 707. The cities of less than 100,000 population gave Yes, 270; No, 987. About 25 unions in all failed to vote. Each of the following large cities gave a majority in favor of organizing the cheap custom tailoring firms: New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Syracuse, Atlanta, Winnipeg, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Toledo; total, 9 cities. Each of the following large cities gave a majority against organizing these firms: Denver, New Haven, Indianapolis, Louisville, New Orleans, Boston, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Omaha, Cincinnati, Columbus, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Memphis, Nashville, Milwaukee, Spokane; total, 17 cities. The following large cities failed to vote: Birmingham, Los Angeles, Worcester, Oakland, San Francisco, Washington, Baltimore, Fall River, Detroit, Newark (N. J.), Albany, Rochester, Cleveland, Portland (Oregon), Scranton, Richmond, Toronto; total, 17 cities.

³⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 86.

³¹ *The Tailor*, March, 1899, p. 8.

the United States, they can start an international organization for themselves. What will be the outcome, no man can say.

In the course of the next two years a number of special order firms and firms making custom tailoring under a factory or team system were organized by the Garment Workers, and certain other employees of the same class of firms formed a union of their own, known as the "Custom Clothing Makers' Union." That all of the tailors' unions were not satisfied with this result is evident from the report of the general secretary to the committee on laws and audit which met in August, 1901. In this report he said:³²

We now have our unions vigorously protesting against the organization of this class of trade either by the independent union or by the Garment Workers; and we have the vote of our general membership saying: "We cannot admit them into the J. T. U. of A." This policy we cannot longer pursue and maintain the respect and support of organized labor in the United States and Canada, nor can we pursue such a policy and maintain our own self-respect.

The committee decided that the question had become again of sufficient importance to require a vote, and gave it a leading place among the propositions which they submitted to the membership in 1901.³³ As in 1899, the vote was adverse to admitting the workers on cheap custom trade, the result being 1,212 in favor and 3,511 against.³⁴ The causes for the negative vote were no doubt similar to those which operated in 1899.

The question of the proper affiliation of the new Custom Clothing Makers' Union was introduced into the 1901 convention of the American Federation of Labor through the application of this union for a charter. The convention did not decide the matter at once, but left it open for discussion by representatives of the various organizations concerned. As one of these representatives, Secretary Lennon asked for advice from the local unions of the J. T. U. of A.³⁵ Sixty-one unions responded to this request. Eight locals favored the admission of the Custom Clothing Makers to the J. T. U. of A. without condition. Fourteen locals favored their being an auxiliary of the J. T. U. of A.

³² *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 5.

³³ Report of committee on laws and audit, *The Tailor*, August, 1901, p. 13; same issue, p. 14, Proposition No. 1.

³⁴ *The Tailor*, November, 1901, supplement, vote on Proposition No. 1.

³⁵ *The Tailor*, January, 1902, editorial, p. 14.

with separate name and label. Twelve locals believed that they should become a part of the Garment Workers' organization. Finally, twenty-nine locals advised that they should be allowed to maintain a separate and distinct union, with such a title and label as would least conflict with those of the J. T. U. of A. After some conferences a charter was granted by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to the workers on cheap custom trade, under the name of "The Special Order Clothing Makers' Union,"³⁶ but this charter was ultimately revoked by the full convention of the A. F. of L., and jurisdiction over the special order tailors was conceded to the Garment Workers.³⁷

It might have been supposed that the question would now remain at rest, but in February, 1903, we find it arising again in the form of a resolution by the Executive Board of the Tailors: That, in view of the continued agitation among our members regarding the admission to membership of the Special Order Tailors, some unions being desirous of taking them in and some strongly opposed, the G. E. B. hereby requests every local union to send to the General Secretary on or before April 1, 1903, a statement regarding the wish of their members as to whether the G. E. B. shall again submit to a general vote the question of the admission to membership in the J. T. U. of A. of the Special Order Tailors.³⁸

This resolution was embodied in an official circular sent out to all local unions, calling for a vote on the question as to whether a referendum on the question of the special order tailors should be taken, and containing further a proposed plan for constituting a Special Order Branch of the J. T. U. of A., in case the vote should be taken and should prove favorable to the admission of the special order tailors.³⁹ The returns showed 103 local unions in favor of a general vote, and 109 unions opposed.⁴⁰ However, the board decided to submit the question, inasmuch as the proposition to take a vote had been initiated by a local union in Chicago, and had been seconded by more than one-fourth of all the

³⁶ Proceedings of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, April 15, 1902. In *American Federationist*, v. 9, p. 333.

³⁷ *Proceedings, A. F. of L.*, November, 1902, pp. 206-207.

³⁸ *The Tailor*, February, 1903, p. 16.

³⁹ For official circular and details of proposed plan, see *The Tailor*, March, 1903, p. 23.

⁴⁰ *The Tailor*, April, 1903, p. 20, Proceedings General Executive Board.

locals.⁴¹ The question was submitted in the following form: "Shall the J. T. U. of A. claim jurisdiction over all persons engaged in the manufacture of custom tailoring, including what is known as the Special Order Tailors?"⁴² The proposition was again defeated, but by a close vote.⁴³ Commenting on the vote in his report to the 1903 committee on laws and audit, the general secretary said:⁴⁴

Our members have by their votes said practically that these people belong to the Garment Workers and this fact in view of all the circumstances surrounding the case must be considered absolute and final; the question never to be reopened in the future. I believe we should claim, and I am confident the Garment Workers will have no objection, jurisdiction over all regular merchant tailoring establishments and the people making their work. . . . What I mean by a legitimate merchant tailor is one that does in the main a local merchant tailoring business.

In the same report the general secretary recommended that an agreement be reached with the Garment Workers' Union with reference to the precise line of demarcation between that union and the tailors, and this recommendation was concurred in by the committee.

The 1903 committee made one or two slight changes in the jurisdiction clause, by which workers on custom tailoring on ladies' dresses and suits, and also bushelmen employed in merchant tailoring and retail ready-made clothing establishments, would be expressly eligible to membership.⁴⁵ These changes were approved by a general vote.⁴⁶

In accord with the recommendation of the committee on laws and audit, the Executive Board at its meeting of September 7, 1903, appointed a committee of three to meet with a like committee of the Garment Workers' Union "to see if the lines of jurisdiction cannot be clearly set forth, or some kind of an alliance between the organizations effected that will be to the benefit of both."⁴⁷ These committees met, and as the result of their

⁴¹ *Constitution*, 1902, Sec. 105; *The Tailor*, May, 1903, editorial, p. 14.

⁴² Official circular, *The Tailor*, May, 1903, p. 18.

⁴³ 3,657 to 3,422. *The Tailor*, August, 1903, pp. 22-24.

⁴⁴ *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 25, Proposition No. 1.

⁴⁶ *The Tailor*, November, 1903, supplement, vote on Proposition No. 1.

⁴⁷ Proceedings of the General Executive Board, *The Tailor*, September, 1903, p. 16.

deliberations, an agreement was drawn up, dated October 19, 1903, the essential feature of which was that custom tailoring establishments selling suits at \$25 or more in the United States, or \$18 or more in Canada, should come under the jurisdiction of the J. T. U. of A., whether the "old-line" journeymen system or the factory system was employed; but that establishments employing the factory system, and selling suits at a price lower than set forth above, should come under the jurisdiction of the United Garment Workers of America. There were, in addition, some minor clauses which provided for the furtherance of common interests on the part of the two unions.⁴⁸

The agreement of 1903 was not found to be very satisfactory, mainly for the reason that where the prejudice on the part of the custom tailors against organizing the cheap trade still prevailed, they would not organize even that portion of it which the agreement placed under their jurisdiction, and the consequence was that the officers of the Tailors had no recourse except to relinquish the trade in such places to the Garment Workers. In New York City, for example, the Journeymen Tailors' Union has never maintained any jurisdiction over anything but regular merchant tailoring stores, and the special order trade, as far as it has been organized at all, has been organized by one or another of the Garment Workers' organizations.

The 1905 convention of the Tailors passed a resolution, which was approved by the membership, to the effect that the 1903 agreement, while it was the best to be had at the time, was no longer adequate, and that further negotiations with the Garment Workers should be entered into.⁴⁹ As a result, a plan of amalgamation was drawn up by a joint committee of the two organizations, but was defeated by both organizations on a referendum vote. Under the proposed plan the amalgamated organization would have been known as "The Garment Workers' and Tailors' International Union." It would have consisted of four branches: (1) custom tailors, (2) cutters, (3) workers on ready-made clothing, (4) workers on overalls, shirts, etc. The plan apparently did not command adequate attention in either organization, but as far as it was given consideration, the defeat seems to have

⁴⁸ For the agreement in full, see *The Tailor*, November, 1903, p. 9.

⁴⁹ *The Tailor*, March, 1905, p. 5, Proposition No. 37.

been due to criticism of details rather than of the general ideas.⁵⁰ The vote of the Tailors' Union on the plan was 4,083 to 2,382 against the proposition. The vote of the Garment Workers was 3,206 to 2,989 against it.⁵¹

When the Journeymen Tailors' Union met in convention in Buffalo in 1909, the question of the cheap trade was presented in a very acute form. Since the previous convention, in 1905, the making of custom work in factories or on a team system had made greater progress than ever before.⁵² The effect upon the Tailors' Union, which, as we have seen, had repeatedly refused to organize workers on the new systems, was very apparent, there being not only no increase, but an appreciable decline in membership in the four years; while in a number of smaller cities the old-line merchant tailoring was nearly destroyed.⁵³ Awakening

⁵⁰ Proposed plan, *The Tailor*, October, 1905, pp. 1-4; vote, February, 1906, p. 20; editorial comment on vote, February, 1906, p. 14. Some comments on the plan from the Garment Workers' standpoint are found in the *Weekly Bulletin of the Clothing Trades*, November 3, 1905, p. 3, article by S. L. Landers, and p. 4, article on "Problems of Amalgamation," reprinted from *Syracuse Industrial Weekly*.

⁵¹ Correspondence with Garment Workers' headquarters.

⁵² See editorials in *The Tailor*, especially March, 1908; August, 1908; February, 1909; June, 1909; September, 1908.

⁵³ No accurate figures are available for the total membership in benefit at any given date, but from 1890 to 1912 the figures are available for the paid-up membership at the end of each month, these figures having been ascertained by actual count from the registers at headquarters, and published in the 1913 report of Secretary Brais. The paid-up membership at any given date is less than the membership in benefit, since members are allowed to become three months and seven days in arrears before they are suspended. However, for comparative purposes the figures in Mr. Brais' report are the best hitherto published. His report shows that on July 1, 1905, the paid-up membership was 12,500; and on July 1, 1909, 11,822; indicating a decline in the four years of 678. There seem to have been two principal reasons for this decline: (1) the financial depression of 1907; (2) the rise of cheap custom tailoring firms. The influence of the panic is clearly seen by comparing the maximum membership during the four years (12,888 on July 1, 1907) with the minimum membership during the same period (11,379 on October 1, 1908). In this period of fifteen months there was a decline of 1,509 in the paid-up membership, or more than twice the net decline for the four years. Nevertheless, the rise of the new systems of tailoring, if not equally obvious, was certainly another cause of the decline in membership. There are a number of small cities, particularly those within range of the St. Louis and Indianapolis special order firms, in which

to these facts, to which attention was forcibly called in the secretary's report,⁵⁴ the convention adopted a resolution that the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America should claim jurisdiction "over all workers engaged in the manufacture of legitimate custom tailoring, no matter what system of work is used."⁵⁵ In the same resolution, delegates of the Tailors' Union to the American Federation of Labor were directed to present the above claim to the convention of that body; a federation of the J. T. U. of A., the Garment Workers and kindred organizations was favored; and the substitution of time or weekly wages for the piece system was recommended. The resolution was approved by a referendum vote of the members,⁵⁶ and became a part of the law of the organization January 1, 1910.⁵⁷

To understand fully the meaning and limitations of the new claim as to jurisdiction, it is necessary to recall that the old-style merchant tailoring was being undermined in two ways: (1) by mail order or "special order" firms located principally in large cities, and manufacturing garments to measure on a factory system; (2) by firms doing a local custom tailoring business on a factory or team system, this class including for the most part firms which formerly had operated on the old plan, but which had changed their system so as to subdivide the labor in a different fashion and to pay everybody by the week. There is a difference of opinion among prominent members who were in attendance at the Buffalo convention as to whether the delegates who voted for the resolution intended to claim jurisdiction over both classes of firms, or simply over the second class. It is the opinion of Mr. Lennon, who was general secretary of the union at the time of the convention, that⁵⁸

the intention of the Buffalo convention was to include under our jurisdiction all custom tailoring, no matter under what system of work it is made; not only such houses as Bell's in New York, but all the firms between his and

the local unions of tailors have been completely wiped out. For Mr. Brais' report, see *The Tailor*, August, 1913, p. 5.

⁵⁴ *The Tailor*, August, 1909, p. 6, report on "Membership;" pp. 8-9, report on "Our Jurisdiction."

⁵⁵ *The Tailor*, August, 1909, p. 44, Proposition No. 40.

⁵⁶ *The Tailor*, November, 1909, supplement, vote on Proposition No. 40. The vote was 3,971 to 1,319 in favor of the proposition.

⁵⁷ *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 175.

⁵⁸ Correspondence, March 13, 1912. Mr. Lennon's personal position was

Scotch Woolen Mills, Kahn, etc., etc.; in fact, all clothing made to the measure of each individual customer.

On the other hand, Mr. Brais, who was chairman of the convention, and who succeeded Mr. Lennon as secretary in 1910, has given his opinion that the immediate supporters of the resolution and those who worked for its adoption had the same view as that quoted from Mr. Lennon above, but that the delegates in general did not have in mind the "long-distance" firms, but only those doing a local business.⁵⁹

a little less sweeping. In commenting upon the proposed extension of jurisdiction, while the vote was pending, he said:

"I believe that the legitimate custom tailoring, no matter what form of work is used to turn it out, should be under our jurisdiction. But I wish to emphasize the word 'legitimate.' I am not in favor of organizing everything that somebody calls custom tailoring and thereby absolutely wipe out of existence the possibility of protecting the interest of the old line journeyman tailor who is still employed single-handed or with one helper." *The Tailor*, September, 1909, p. 3, comment on Proposition No. 40.

And in his letter accepting the nomination for secretary in 1909, Mr. Lennon said further, referring to factory and team work (particularly in the second class of houses noted above):

"I believe that the aim of our union should be to place this class of work entirely under a weekly system where the employer furnishes the factory or shop and hires all his help, both men and women, by the week at proper wage and reasonable hours of labor. And that all contract work should be prohibited just as rapidly as possible, and all persons who are 'go-betweens' as between the proprietor and those who actually do the work should be eliminated, and whatever of factory system we must have in the custom tailoring, that it shall be without contractors or sub-contractors of any kind, shape or description. . . . I believe as the factory system advances, displacing journeymen tailors that the shop should be organized and the journeymen tailors given the work and not somebody else. . . . As to the organization of shops that are making their work under a factory system in any particular locality, I believe that the local union in existence, if there is one, should be primarily the judges as to whether such shop shall or shall not be organized, and that the organization shall be governed accordingly." *The Tailor*, October, 1909, p. 4.

⁵⁹ "The convention, being composed of journeymen tailors who were working under the old system of production, had in mind stores that they were working in, but who in time would adopt the new system of production or team system. It is my opinion that the delegates had no intention of organizing firms who do long distance tailoring, as that would injure the small towns and locals. But those of us who were back of this resolution and who fought for its adoption meant all classes of tailoring that is made to the individual measure of the customer." E. J. Brais, correspondence, March 15, 1912.

In accord with the instructions of the 1909 convention, the Tailors' delegates presented to the convention of the American Federation of Labor the claim for jurisdiction embodied in the new resolution. The claim was referred to the Executive Council, with instructions that the council bring about a conference between representatives of the Tailors' Union and of the Garment Workers' Union for the purpose of dealing with the matter at issue.⁶⁰ However, no record of any such conference is found prior to the 1910 convention of the American Federation of Labor. At this convention the delegates representing the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America, the United Garment Workers of America, and the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, held a conference, but were prevented by lack of time from any exhaustive discussion. However, it was agreed that in the case of any large trade movement or strike by any of the organizations, all three would cooperate as far as possible for the success of such movement. It was further agreed, provided the executive boards of the international unions approved, that a conference be held shortly in New York City between representatives of the organizations concerned "to promote and work out if possible some further means of practical cooperation, federation or amalgamation."⁶¹ In accord with this action the General Executive Board of the Journeymen Tailors' Union appointed two delegates to attend the conference whenever it should be held.⁶² Secretary Brais, one of the delegates appointed, called upon the representatives of the other organizations in New York City during the month of February, 1911, but nothing of a definite character was effected.⁶³

In an article dated January 1, 1912, former Secretary Lennon suggested the elements of a plan of amalgamation, under which the Garment Workers', Ladies' Garment Workers' and Journeymen Tailors' organizations would form a single international union, but the local unions of each branch of the industry would

⁶⁰ *Proceedings, A. F. of L. Convention*, 1909, pp. 125, 220, 291-292; *The Tailor*, December, 1909, pp. 21-22, report of Tailors' delegates.

⁶¹ *The Tailor*, December, 1910, p. 5, reports of Tailors' delegates to 1910 convention of American Federation of Labor.

⁶² *The Tailor*, December, 1910, p. 25, Proceedings of the General Executive Board for December 4, 1910.

⁶³ *The Tailor*, March, 1911, p. 23.

be organized separately and have local autonomy.⁶⁴ This plan was never acted upon officially.

In the early part of 1912 a tendency could be noticed on the part of the Journeymen Tailors to take the fullest possible advantage of the claim for extended jurisdiction adopted in 1909. In an editorial in the February, 1912, *Tailor*, Secretary Brais said:

We again wish to call the attention of all locals and members that our jurisdiction includes all custom tailors both in men's and ladies' trade, made under any system of production, whether it be individual production, piece work, week work, sectional or team work; all bushelmen in all classes of trade, in clothing stores, cleaning and pressing establishments, pressers and helpers in any of the above. We are aiming at a thorough organization of the trade in all of its branches and concede jurisdiction of any part of it to no organization. Our members must be on guard and let no opportunity slip to effect organization in any of the above establishments.

As far as employees of pressing and cleaning establishments were concerned, there was considerable reason for claiming jurisdiction over such employees, as they were doing work of a kind done in all tailor shops, and in fact jurisdiction over them, with the exception of employees of pressing, dyeing and cleaning shops connected with laundries, was later conceded to the Tailors' Union by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor.⁶⁵ In the matter, however, of organizing the cheaper branches of the custom trade, opposition was met with from the Garment Workers. Efforts by the Tailors in New York City to secure a mass meeting of clothing workers were interfered with by the Garment Workers, on the ground that the Tailors were trespassing on the jurisdiction of the latter.⁶⁶ Similar controversies arose in St. Louis,⁶⁷ Brantford, Ont.,⁶⁸ Newark, N. J.,⁶⁹ and in other places, the complainants being now on one side, and now on the other. In some cases the Ladies' Garment Workers,

⁶⁴ *The Tailor*, January, 1912, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁵ Abstract of Minutes of meeting of Executive Council of American Federation of Labor, August 12-19, 1912. In *American Federationist*, v. 19, p. 857. In 1916 jurisdiction over employees of dyeing, pressing and cleaning establishments connected with laundries was granted to the Laundry Workers' International Union. *Proceedings, A. F. of L.*, 1916, p. 123.

⁶⁶ *The Tailor*, January, 1912, p. 25, report of Organizer Emanuel Jacobs.

⁶⁷ *The Tailor*, March, 1912, pp. 22-23, report of Organizer F. Petera.

⁶⁸ *The Tailor*, March 1912, pp. 28-29, report of Organizer Hugh Robinson.

⁶⁹ *The Tailor*, April, 1912, p. 26, report of Organizer Thomas Sweeney.

as well as the workers on men's clothing, were involved. The objections of the United Garment Workers to the Tailors' policy appeared strongly in an article ⁷⁰ in the *Weekly Bulletin*, the organ of the Garment Workers, in which the agreement of 1903 between the J. T. U. of A. and the United Garment Workers was cited, and it was alleged that this agreement had not been lived up to by the tailors. Evidently some of these controversies were appealed to the American Federation of Labor, for in the report of the meeting of the Executive Council for May 9-17, 1912,⁷¹ appears the following:

On the controversy between the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America and the United Garment Workers of America in regard to the charge of transgression of the Garment Workers on the jurisdiction of the Tailors, it was directed that a conference of both organizations be called to meet at Washington with President Gompers, if the latter is in the city at the time; if not, that Secretary Morrison meet with them.

In accord with the directions of the Executive Council, a conference was held in Washington, September 30, 1912, between three representatives of the Journeymen Tailors' Union, two representatives of the United Garment Workers, and three representatives of the Ladies' Garment Workers. In his report upon this conference, Secretary Brais of the Tailors said: ⁷²

Many things relative to an amalgamation were discussed. It seemed, however, that the time for an amalgamation has not arrived, as each international union has many problems confronting them which will take some time to solve. The forms of organization are not similar, the systems of dues and benefits are different, and the belief that exists in the minds of some of the representatives that an amalgamation could not work successfully, were handicaps that could not be overcome.

However, it was adopted as the sense of the conference that amalgamation of the three organizations into one should finally take place; that as soon as practicable the headquarters of the three organizations should be in one city, and that there should be selected by each of the organizations at interest a committee of three, these committees to hold frequent conferences and endeavor to work out a practical plan of amalgamation.

Little appears to have resulted from the plan adopted by this

⁷⁰ Reprinted in *The Tailor*, March, 1912, pp. 17-18.

⁷¹ *American Federationist*, v. 19, p. 570; *Proceedings, A. F. of L.*, 1912, Report of Executive Council, pp. 118-119.

⁷² *The Tailor*, October, 1912, pp. 15-16, general secretary's report.

conference. The Garment Workers were shortly occupied with a great strike in New York City, which was not settled until February, 1912, and this probably accounts to a considerable extent for the neglect of the amalgamation proposition. In fact it was not until the 1913 convention of the Tailors' Union that the question again became prominent.

During the four years between the 1909 and 1913 conventions it had become increasingly evident that a single organization in the tailoring industry would be an advantage to the workers. The cheaper systems continued to encroach upon the old-line work; numerous custom merchants changed or tried to change their shops to a factory system; strikes on the part of workmen to prevent this change as a rule were failures, and strikes for other purposes were handicapped by the fact that workers normally engaged on cheap custom tailoring could be secured to take the places of the strikers, or, what amounted to the same thing, the local merchant involved in a strike could send his work away to other cities, where it would be made by the cheap workers. In view of these facts, when the convention of the Journeymen Tailors' Union met in Bloomington, Ill., August 4, 1913, Secretary Brais recommended strongly to the convention a radical change of policy.⁷³ The difficulty of organizing cheap workers under a system of dues and benefits adapted to better paid workers was pointed out, as well as the necessity for an industrial union covering the whole tailoring industry. It was therefore recommended by the secretary that the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America should change its name to read, "Tailors' Industrial Union;" should lower the dues; should abolish ultimately the sick and death benefit, and reduce the strike benefit; and should claim jurisdiction over all workers in the tailoring industry, not only those engaged in the custom branch (regular custom tailors, factory, special order and team workers, bushelmen, helpers and apprentices, pressers, dyers and cleaners), but also the garment workers employed on ready-made clothing.⁷⁴

⁷³ Report of Secretary Brais, *The Tailor*, August, 1913, pp. 2-16.

⁷⁴ In explanation of this claim, it was stated later by Secretary Brais that it was not the intention of the Tailors' Union to assume jurisdiction over garment workers already organized by other unions. The Tailors' Union claimed only the right to take in unorganized workers, no matter what branch of the industry they belonged to. "The unorganized belong to any

This proposition was well received by the convention, especially by the Socialist wing, which is well known to be in favor of industrial unionism as opposed to craft unionism. Opposition developed from a few delegates, who maintained that the proposed action, in trespassing upon the jurisdiction of the United Garment Workers and of the Ladies' Garment Workers, was in violation of the constitution of the American Federation of Labor, with which the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America was affiliated. These delegates favored the end in view, namely, the unification or alliance of all trade union interests in the clothing trades, but preferred to respect the authority of the American Federation of Labor while endeavoring to secure an adjustment of the whole matter. In spite of this protest the resolution to claim full jurisdiction in the tailoring industry was carried by a vote of 111 to 9. The convention voted also to change the name of the organization to "Tailors' Industrial Union, International," and passed a resolution favorable to forming one union in the tailoring industry. When it came to the question of reducing benefits, the convention refused to make any change in the sick benefit, but a virtual reduction of the death benefit was recommended in a proposition to extend the term of continuous membership required to secure the maximum benefit of \$100 from four to ten years, with corresponding changes in the terms of membership required to secure the smaller amounts. It was also voted to reduce the strike benefit to \$5 a week.⁷⁵ On the question of dues, the only concession that could be secured from the convention was to reduce the dues of helpers earning less than \$12 a week to 40 cents a month, provided they would not claim sick or

organization that can get them, and we hardly believe that any fair minded man will deny us the right to organize in this unorganized field." Editorial by E. J. Brais, *The Tailor*, May, 1914, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Under the existing constitution the strike benefit was six dollars a week, where the strike or lockout lasted less than six weeks, and nine dollars a week after a strike or lockout had been on more than six weeks. *Constitution*, 1910, Sec. 59. The new proposition was to establish a uniform benefit of five dollars per week, regardless of the duration of the strike. It was felt that the old rule would be too great a strain upon the treasury of the union, particularly if the extension of jurisdiction should bring in a considerable number of new members in need of help to raise their wages.

death benefits; otherwise they should pay full dues; i. e., 65 cents a month to the national union, and local dues as required by the local union.⁷⁶

When the action of the convention was submitted to a referendum vote, all of the recommendations noted above were carried, except the proposition to modify the death benefit. As a net result, therefore, the jurisdiction was extended, the name changed, the strike benefit reduced to \$5 a week, and the dues of helpers decreased.⁷⁷

The new claims of the Tailors' Union with reference to jurisdiction aroused immediate indignation in the ranks of the Garment Workers, especially when the Tailors began carrying out their policy in earnest and began to organize employees claimed by the Garment Workers' organization. The result was that a protest was filed with the American Federation of Labor by the United Garment Workers of America. As is customary in such cases, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor directed first that the Tailors' Union and the Garment Workers' Union should hold a conference and endeavor to adjust their differences themselves.⁷⁸ On December 19, 1913, the Executive Board of the Tailors' Union addressed a communication to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, and as this letter contains a statement of the position of the Tailors' Union, it is considered worth while to quote a portion of it:⁷⁹

At this time there are three separate organizations or international unions operating in the industry, all of them doing their best individually, but in no way united or working together. The action of our members may result in a jurisdiction controversy; in such contention, entailing a great waste of time, money and energy fighting each other; all of which should be expended for the purpose of organizing the industry and solidifying the ranks and harmonizing our efforts for the one purpose, that of uplifting the workers.

Gentlemen, we have no desire to enter into a controversy of this kind and sincerely hope to avoid it; and we presume that the other organizations in question also dislike a struggle of this character. Therefore, we respectfully request the assistance and advice of your honorable body to recommend

⁷⁶ Proceedings of the 1913 convention, *The Tailor*, August, 1913.

⁷⁷ See Propositions 2, 3, 4, 20, 30, 31 and 38, *The Tailor*, September, 1913, pp. 3-15; also vote on same, *The Tailor*, November, 1913, supplement.

⁷⁸ *The Tailor*, January, 1914, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *The Tailor*, January, 1914, pp. 23-24.

a plan of action that will be satisfactory to all concerned; thus avoiding an unnecessary struggle between the organizations directly interested.

We respectfully suggest the following: That the three international unions operating in the clothing trades, viz.: The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the United Garment Workers of America and the Tailors' Industrial Union (as it will be known after January 1, 1914) be instructed or requested to coöperate to organize the workers in the clothing industry, this being the main object.

That either of the three International Unions be recognized as having the right to organize non-union workers in the clothing industry, and affiliate them with the Union during the organizing work, until such time as amalgamation may be secured.

That, after new organization has been effected in any establishment or city, that the matter of their affiliation be left entirely to the wisdom and judgment of the newly organized workers.

That there be a general and free exchange of cards from one organization to another.

That in case where firms desire to terminate their agreement at the expiration of same, with one organization, and enter into agreement with another, the matter be decided upon by joint committee and that the decision of the committee be binding upon all parties concerned.

That the organizations in question coöperate to every other extent to bring about the much desired end, that of strong, powerful and efficient organizations in the clothing trades.

The representatives of our organization are ready and willing at all times to meet representatives of the other two organizations with a view to arriving at an amicable adjustment.

On January 19, 1914, representatives of the Tailors' Industrial Union and of the United Garment Workers of America appeared before the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to argue their respective claims. On February 2, 1914, the following letter, containing the decision of the Executive Council, was sent to Secretary Brais of the Tailors' Union:

Washington, D. C., February 2, 1914.

Mr. E. J. Brais,

Dear Sir and Brother:—

The Executive Council of the A. F. of L. at its session, January 19 to 24, considered carefully all of the matter presented, both orally and in writing by your organization in support of its application for change of title and extension of jurisdiction reached and the decision of the Executive Council is as follows:

“The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor finds such change of name and extension of jurisdiction to be a violation of the law of the Federation, Section 11 of Article 19, as follows:

“ ‘No affiliated international, national or local union shall be permitted to change its title or name, if any trespass is made thereby on the juris-

diction of an affiliated organization, without having first obtained the consent and approval of a convention of the American Federation of Labor.'

"The representatives of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America and the United Garment Workers of America appearing before the Executive Council at the hearing, all contended that the desire of both was for amalgamation of the two unions into one, and the Executive Council, therefore, requests the unions at interest to hold a conference of representatives of the two unions within sixty days, with the object in view of effecting, if possible, consolidation of the two unions into one, and the Executive Council tenders its good offices to be helpful in every way possible to bring about such organization."

You will please accept this as official notification of the action of the Council in this matter. I shall be glad to have you advise me as to what steps are taken by your organization for holding the conference as suggested by the Executive Council. I should add that a letter similar to this is being sent to the Executive officers of the United Garment Workers of America and the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. With best wishes, and hoping to hear from you whenever convenient, I am

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL GOMPERS

President, American Federation of Labor.⁸⁰

In order to understand subsequent developments in the clothing industry, it is necessary to relate these developments to certain larger movements.⁸¹ It is well known to students of the labor movement that for a number of years there have been fairly well-defined factions among the members of the American Federation of Labor. At one extreme are the conservatives, who recognize the present industrial system as a necessary basis for trade union policy, and who adhere to the craft union and to the present administration of the American Federation of Labor. The members of this group are either "old party" adherents or else vote independently for those candidates regardless of party whose record or promises with reference to labor legislation are satisfactory.⁸² At the other extreme are the radicals, who favor

⁸⁰ *The Tailor*, February, 1914, p. 18.

⁸¹ Up to this point the jurisdictional question in the clothing trades, and the effort to secure an understanding among the various organizations, were mainly trade union matters internal to the industry, and had only a limited connection with political movements (*cf. supra*, pp. 85, 103) or with the development of factions in the general labor movement. From now on, however, the relation of the movements in the tailoring trade to the Socialist and industrial unionist movement as a whole assumes an increasing importance.

⁸² The conditions in the recent election, in which probably a majority of

industrial unionism, and who are eager for "education" and political activity along Socialist lines. This group is quite uniformly opposed to the present administration, headed by President Gompers, and favors the referendum rather than the convention for the election of A. F. of L. officers, hoping in this way to elect more "progressive" candidates. Finally we distinguish a middle group, which we may call if we like the "liberal" group, whose members favor trade union methods for trade union purposes, but are impatient toward the old parties politically, and have no bias in favor of craft unionism, if federations, alliances or amalgamations can be proved to be more effective. In this group would be found both adherents and opponents of President Gompers. It is obvious that it is impossible to draw the line sharply. For example, even the "conservatives," as here defined, favor the alliance or amalgamation of closely related trades, as a method of settling jurisdictional disputes, provided all of the factions are agreeable. But in a general way the differences of opinion here outlined exist, and the terms "conservative" and "radical" (or "progressive") would be intelligible to any trade unionist, while he would recognize the existence of a middle group corresponding to what we have called the "liberals."

The movement in the direction of radical opinion, as above outlined, has been of great importance in the history of the Tailors' Union, particularly in the last fifteen years.⁸³ The election of 1909, when Secretary Lennon was superseded by Secretary Brais, was regarded by the latter's supporters as something in the nature of a Socialist revolution. Mr. Brais was recognized in the Buffalo convention as the leader of the radical group, (or "Progressives," as they called themselves)⁸⁴ and became a candidate for secretary on a frank Socialist and industrial union-

the members of the A. F. of L. supported President Wilson, must be regarded as somewhat exceptional.

⁸³ The first clear-cut effort to commit the Tailors' Union officially to Socialist principles appears to have been made in 1903, when a proposition to endorse the national platform of the Socialist party was submitted to the committee on laws and audit by the Fargo, N. D., local union. *The Tailor*, August, 1903, p. 16, col. 2.

⁸⁴ Mr. Brais no doubt numbered among his supporters also some members who would be classed as "liberals" under our foregoing analysis.

ist platform.⁸⁵ Following his inauguration the tone of the official journal became increasingly Socialistic, and it was under his administration that the radical changes of 1913 were initiated.

⁸⁵ The respective positions of the leading candidates in this election are indicated by the following extracts from their letters of acceptance:

Extract from letter of acceptance of E. J. Brais; *The Tailor*, November, 1909, p. 1:

"Industrial conditions determine the well-being of the worker, and dictate an industrial form of organization, that can promote and defend his interest of today and meet the requirements of the future.

"The integral Industrial Union is superior to all others to meet the needs of education and organization of the working class. Another important weapon which the workers must recognize and use, is the ballot. I do not want anyone to misunderstand me, or run away with the idea that it is a dream, not practical, that it is contrary to trade unionism or in opposition to the trade union movement. I am a trade unionist, am not trying to blend trade unionism with politics, but I do stand for political action of workers, independent of the parties that represent the exploiting class, believing that it would be of great benefit to the working class. I do not want the unions to go into politics, but I do want the members as individuals to go to the polls and vote for their interest. This I shall advocate wherever and whenever possible."

Extract from letter of acceptance of John B. Lennon; *The Tailor*, October, 1909, pp. 4-5:

"Much has been said in the trade union movement, and in our union as well as others, regarding the matter of being progressive as to political action by the working classes. Some of our members, some outside our union, have charged me with being reactionary. The charge is absolutely false and without foundation in fact, but I am perfectly willing to state just what I believe upon this subject, and I do not want to be misunderstood by anybody. In our country, it is self-evident that the wage-workers are not yet ready to act unitedly along political lines. There is no general agreement as to what the proper line of political action should be. Consequently, any official action by a union can be only a disturbing factor in an organization and not one promoting harmony and unity in the accomplishment of better trade conditions. I believe that in accord with the fundamental principles of trade unionism every member has a right to hold and exercise such political and religious views as their own reason and conscience may dictate without any official interference from the organization. . . . A member has a right under the laws and principles of trade unionism to be a Catholic or a Protestant or an Agnostic, as he chooses, and the organization has no right whatever, nor have the officers any right, to interfere with the exercise of that privilege by the individual member in any way, shape or manner. And what is true of a man's religious belief is equally true politically. They have a right to be Socialists,

There is strong evidence that the campaign which resulted in these changes in the Tailors' Union was only part of a larger campaign for the control of the whole union movement in the clothing industry by the Socialists and industrial unionists.

For some time there had been unrest in the United Garment Workers' and the Ladies' Garment Workers' organizations, on account of the alleged conservatism of the men at the head of these organizations. These officers were of the "old school" represented by President Gompers and other leaders of the American Federation of Labor. Friction between this type of men and the members of the garment workers' unions was inevitable. Many of the immigrants who have come over by the

Democrats, Republicans, Prohibitionists or anything or nothing in politics they each one desire; and the organization has no right to interfere. . . . We need in the trade union to make it a success men and women of all religious views and men and women of all political views. If some faith or some party is made a requisite of membership, then there will be no union left, and nothing accomplished, and I am against anything of that kind. . . . I hold that the trade union is the logical and only possible practical step that the wage-working class of the world could adopt at this time for the promotion of their industrial betterment. . . . Philosophers, poets and would-be economists have spun most beautiful theories - beautiful to them at any rate - as to the complete emancipation of the workers from all injustices imposed upon them. As dreams they were a success. As emancipators they were a failure. The trade union as a dream is a failure. As a practical evolutionary method of improving the social, industrial, physical and moral condition of the working classes, it is the greatest success the world has seen."

It should not be supposed that the only issues in the election were those outlined in the above letters. There is good reason to believe that the presence of real or imagined grievances against the administration resulting from the control of strikes and other matters handled from headquarters, together with a campaign of personal abuse which was carried on by certain members who believed themselves to be personally wronged by the general secretary, had much to do with the result; and there is some evidence that the "wet" and "dry" issue was not altogether absent, Mr. Lennon being well known as a "dry" advocate. In fact, it is not by any means certain that upon the Socialist and industrial unionist issues alone Mr. Brais could have been elected. An analysis of the vote in the 1909 election, as compared with the vote on amalgamation with a certain faction of the garment workeres in 1914 (*infra*, p. 113) shows clearly that the vote for Lennon and Brais did not by any means follow the question of conservative or "progressive" doctrines as a sole issue.

thousands from Europe in recent years and entered the clothing trades do not accept with good grace the restraints of conservative unionism, nor do they lay aside readily the syndicalist tendencies so prevalent today in Europe. In justice it should be said that in some localities, notably New York and Chicago, the garment workers have conducted large and successful strikes, in some cases without being affiliated at the outset with the national unions at all. The success of these strikes, however, has depended largely upon public sympathy and upon the donations of unions throughout the country. In fact, in many cases the workers have joined the union solely to participate in the strike, and when the object of the strike was accomplished, they have ceased to pay dues.⁸⁶ But the success of such strikes, coupled

⁸⁶ A somewhat humorous account of a garment workers' strike from the journeymen tailors' standpoint is found in the following editorial (*The Tailor*, June 1, 1915, p. 3):

"The only way the U. G. W. can increase their membership is through the means of a general strike. When the strike is over thousands drop the union, until there is another general strike. A general strike in the ready-made clothing trade is a money-making proposition. Months before the strike is declared they take in so-called members on the payment of fifty cents; when the strike is declared they charge them no less than three dollars. . . . When the strike is on a few weeks, the national officers, under the guiding light of a lawyer, make agreements with as many firms as they can and then announce that the strike is over. As soon as the strike is declared, the hat is passed in all unions in the country by some of the most skillful beggars."

The above account may appear to be a little biased, but is confirmed in a measure by the following statements from the Garment Workers' journal itself:

"Owing to the struggle between capital and labor, the odds are against us, mainly because, first, only a part of the workers are organized, and secondly, those who are organized, and who receive through their union higher wages and better working conditions, often fail to maintain their membership, believing that there is no necessity of paying their dues, and that whenever need arises, caused by poorer conditions, etc., they can again affiliate, knowing that the lapse in their membership will not result in any form of punishment or loss to them in benefits, as would be the case if such funds [i. e., benefit funds] existed." (Report of President Rickert of the United Garment Workers to the 1914 convention, Nashville, October 12-17, 1914. *The Garment Worker*, October 16, 1914, p. 1.)

Also the following, from same report, p. 6:

"A few months before the strike the total membership in Greater New York averaged less than four thousand. . . . A general strike was

with the spread of Socialist and industrialist ideas, has led the workers to believe that the mass movement, the industrial union and the general strike are more effective weapons than craft unionism, conservative leadership and the accumulation of a strike fund. To indicate all of the reasons for the estrangement between a large element of the Garment Workers and their national officers would lead us too far afield.⁸⁷ We can note here only the effect of the condition described upon the various organizations.

The Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, at the convention of this union in Cleveland, Ohio, June 1-13, 1914, elected a new set of national officers. It is presumed that these new officers were in harmony with Socialist and industrial tendencies, since at the same time the convention declared that no official should be allowed to run for political office on any "capitalistic" ticket, and adopted a resolution favoring the amalgamation of all the clothing trades.⁸⁸

The effort in the United Garment Workers' Union to displace the conservative administration represented by President Rickert and Secretary Larger, was not so successful. These officers had resisted overtures on the part of the Tailors' Industrial Union for amalgamation, alleging, according to the Tailors' journal, that the Tailors' Union was on the decline and would eventually

called, which took place on Dec. 30, 1912 . . . more than fifty thousand workers walked out within a few days. The number gradually increased so that within a few weeks a conservative estimate placed the number out on strike at 110,000."

⁸⁷ In a letter addressed to the 1914 convention of the United Garment Workers, Mr. Benjamin Schweitzer, a prominent organizer in that union and evidently a spokesman for the administration, gives the history of the New York strike of 1912, and states that the settlement agreed to by President Rickert was attacked by opponents of the national officers, and that these opponents were supported by the Jewish publication, *Forward*. This journal, he says, has continued to publish attacks on the national officers. (*The Garment Worker*, October 23, 1914, p. 1.) It seems certain that racial and religious feeling has had much to do with the formation of factions in the garment workers' unions. When in New York the writer of this thesis found that the Jewish workers in the clothing industry had a federation of their own known as the United Hebrew Trades, and were acting almost independently of the national officers of the Garment Workers' Union, although nominally affiliated with that body.

⁸⁸ *The Tailor*, July, 1914, pp. 2-3.

have to succumb to the newer organizations on their own terms.⁸⁹ The apparent opposition of these officers to the industrial movement, together with other difficulties of some years' standing, a part of which have already been discussed, led to increased disaffection, and at the convention of the United Garment Workers at Nashville, Tenn., in October, 1914, 143 delegates, mostly from New York City, and representing in the main workers on cheap custom tailoring,⁹⁰ claiming that they had been fraudulently unseated by the Rickert-Larger faction, held a convention of their own, elected officers, and declared themselves favorable to amalgamation of the clothing trades.⁹¹

It was not long before negotiations were on foot for the amalgamation of the Tailors' Industrial Union with the seceding faction of the Garment Workers. This movement is not surprising when it is recalled that the leaders of both of these organizations were in essential accord politically and in their attitude toward industrial unionism. For a considerable time prior to the Nashville episode, the Tailors' journal had been full of articles advo-

⁸⁹ *The Tailor*, December 29, 1914, p. 3, col. 1.

⁹⁰ It will be recalled that the local union of Journeymen Tailors in New York City had confined itself to organizing the better class of custom tailoring, the cheap custom workers being left to the Garment Workers.

⁹¹ *The Tailor*, December 29, 1914, p. 3. The administration side of this affair is given by Mr. Benjamin Schweitzer in a statement published in *The Garment Worker*, October 30, 1914, in which Mr. Schweitzer alleges that the report of the credentials committee was still pending when the seceding delegates "bolted," and that the split was premeditated by these delegates.

A long defense of the seceders' position is found in the report of the officers of the seceding faction to the special convention of that group held in New York City in the latter part of December, 1914. A part of this report is reprinted in *The Tailor*, January 26, 1915.

That the new administration of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and the new organization of garment workers formed at Nashville were in essential agreement is evidenced by the conduct of the delegates of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, one of whom was the president of the union, at the 1916 convention of the American Federation of Labor. These delegates defended the seceding organization of garment workers and opposed action designed to discipline the seceding union by declaring a boycott among the A. F. of L. unions on clothing made by firms having an agreement with the seceders. See *Baltimore Evening Sun*, November 25, 1916, p. 14; also *Jewish Daily Forward*, November 26, 1916.

cating amalgamation, the administration evidently desiring to prepare the minds of the members for a move of this character. Soon after the Nashville convention, Mr. Sidney Hillman, president of the seceding faction of the Garment Workers, and a committee of his organization, appeared before the General Executive Board of the Tailors' Union to discuss the proposition. An agreement was finally worked out for the formation of an amalgamated organization, as follows:

AGREEMENT ⁹²

First, this organization shall be known as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Second, the officers shall consist of: General President, General Secretary, General Treasurer, General Auditor, and eleven General Executive Board members, three of whom must be from the Tailors' Industrial Union.

Third, the G. E. B. shall organize the industry into departments when conditions warrant. Such department shall have full control of their own funds and shall have the right to make such laws to govern their department as they see fit, providing such laws do not conflict with the general laws.

Fourth, per capita tax payable to General Office shall be no less than fifteen cents per month for each member in good standing.

Fifth, method of election of general officers to be left until after the amalgamation. Then for the general membership to decide by referendum.

The above agreement was submitted to a general vote of the Tailor's Union. As the call for a vote was published in the journal of December 15, 1914, and the vote was required to be at headquarters December 24, 1914, the matter was of necessity acted upon hastily, and it has been charged by the opponents of amalgamation that this was done purposely.⁹³ However this may be, the proposition was carried by a vote of 3,441 to 2,486. The total vote of 5,927 represented about one-half of the voting strength of the union. Of a total of 280 local unions, 219 sent in their vote in time to be counted.⁹⁴

On December 26, 1914, two days after the close of the Tailors' vote on the amalgamation, the Hillman faction of the Garment

⁹² *The Tailor*, December 15, 1914.

⁹³ *The Tailor*, January 5, 1915, p. 4. Letter of C. M. Rakow, in "open forum" column.

⁹⁴ *The Tailor*, January 5 and January 19, 1915. The final vote as given above is quoted from the issue of January 19, as the returns published in the issue of January 5 required some slight corrections.

For purposes of comparison the following statement is given, covering all votes taken by the Tailors' Union, either upon the question of jurisdiction

Workers held a special convention in New York City. This convention was attended by two "fraternal delegates" from the Tailors' Industrial Union. A telegram received from the general office of the Tailors' Union, indicating that the amalgamation proposition had been carried by that organization, was received with much enthusiasm. The Garment Workers' convention did not undertake to legislate for the whole amalgamation, but for itself it passed the following important measures: (1) The name, "Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America," was adopted; (2) the per capita tax of members was fixed at 15 cents per month; (3) it was stipulated that no member should have the right to belong to two unions of the same trade at one and the same time (apparently this was aimed at the old United Garment Workers' Union, from which the Hillman faction had withdrawn); (4) the salary of president was set at \$50 per week and expenses, and the salary of secretary at \$50 per week; (5) appointment and salaries of general organizers were left in the hands of the General Executive Board; (6) Mr. Sidney Hillman was re-elected president, and Mr. Joseph Schlossberg re-elected general secretary; (7) the members of the General Executive Board were re-elected and one vacancy filled; (8) provision was made for conventions to be held biennially, and the city of Rochester, New York, was chosen as the place for the next convention.⁹⁵

Although the Hillman group had adopted for itself the name proposed in the original agreement for the amalgamation as a whole, it did not thereby consolidate its interests with those of

over cheap custom tailoring, or upon the question of amalgamation with the Garment Workers:

<i>Date of vote</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total vote</i>	<i>Total membership (est.)</i>	<i>Per cent, total vote of all members</i>
Nov. 1897	2133	233	2366	5700	41.5
Mch. 1899	905	1695	2600	6200	42.0
Nov. 1901	1212	3511	4723	9700	48.6
Aug. 1903	3422	3657	7079	14500	49.0
Feb. 1906	2383	4083	6466	13500	48.0
Nov. 1909	3971	1319	5290	13000	40.1
Dec. 1914	3441	2486	5927	13000	45.6
July 1915	1339	3961	5300	13000	40.1

⁹⁵ *The Tailor*, January 5, 1915, p. 2. Report of Fraternal Delegates to the special convention of the garment workers.

the Tailors. In articles under the date of January 19, 1915, Secretary Brais of the Tailors' Union took pains to point out that the new officers of the Hillman group, now known as "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America," were representing their own branch only, but that as soon as provision could be made, the joint organizations would elect permanent officers for the amalgamation. Mr. Brais pointed out further that the vote of his organization to amalgamate did not by any means "finish the job," but that numerous difficulties were still to be faced. In this connection he said:

The members must remember that we have different dues; pay sick, death and strike benefits; and that due provision must be made to guard against any of our funds being used for any other purpose than that specified by our constitution. The systems of production differ very largely. Where our international union deals with small groups working for small firms, the Garment Workers work for large manufacturers, where many thousands of workers are employed. To frame a proposition that will apply generally is a proposition.

In the same issue Mr. Brais indicated that negotiations were on foot looking toward the adoption of a constitution for the amalgamation, and that arrangements had been made for a conference to be held in Rochester, N. Y., between the executive boards of the two organizations.⁹⁶

The Rochester conference took place January 16 and 17, 1915, the two executive boards acting as a temporary joint executive council for the amalgamation. At this conference a constitution was adopted, of which some of the most important provisions were as follows:⁹⁷

(1) The Preamble laid down the principles of industrial unionism as a step toward the ultimate control of industry by the working class.

(2) The name, "Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America," was definitely adopted for the amalgamation.

(3) The executive power was vested in a General Executive Council of eleven members, of whom three were to be from the Journeymen Tailors' Department.

(4) Provision was made for legislation by a biennial convention, or by the Executive Council between conventions, all amendments to be confirmed by referendum vote.

(5) Four general officers were provided for: general president, gen-

⁹⁶ *The Tailor*, January 19, 1915.

⁹⁷ Proceedings of the General Executive Council, Rochester, N. Y. (Not printed.)

eral vice-president and editor, general secretary and general treasurer; these four officers to be *ex officio* members of the General Executive Council. Salary of general president, general vice-president and general secretary was set at \$40 per week; of general treasurer, \$50 per year.

(6) Per capita tax to the national organization was set at 15 cents per member per month; dues to the local union to be not less than 50 cents per member per month. It was stipulated, "All assessments shall take precedence over per capita tax," but no statement was made as to conditions under which assessments could be levied. Strikes were placed under control of the General Executive Council, but no provision was made for sick, death or strike benefits.

(7) Male or female workers not less than sixteen years of age, employed in the manufacture of clothing, were made eligible to membership, but no member was allowed to be a member of more than one local union at the same time, nor of any other organization of the trade, under a penalty of fine or expulsion by the L. U. of which he was first a member.

Other provisions were confined in the main to routine matters.

The constitution as adopted by the conference made no provision for its own ratification by the members. In his report upon the conference, Secretary Brais of the Tailors said:

This constitution will be published and put out to a vote of the members for ratification, as soon as the matters are corrected and things gotten into shape. . . . To inject at this time the nomination and election of officers, the introduction of new laws and propositions by local unions, would only confuse the situation. It was thought best to first establish the foundation, after which the membership would have an opportunity of handling the entire matter as they saw fit. . . . All these things will be presented to the membership in due time.

In addition to the adoption of the formal constitution, the conference decided that both organizations should begin to pay per capita tax to the amalgamated organization on February 1, 1915; that for the time being, separate headquarters should be maintained, the Tailors in Chicago and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in New York; that the Tailors' branch should be known as the Journeymen Tailors' Department of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, while the Garment Workers' branch should be known as the Clothing Workers of America; and that no convention should be held until September, 1916. The joint executive council was to serve until that time. Temporary officers were elected, as follows: president, Sidney Hillman; vice-president, J. Schlossberg; general secretary, E. J. Brais; general treasurer, T. Lapan.

Mr. Brais concluded his report of the conference in the Tailors' journal with a warning to the members that the American Federation of Labor, in his judgment a "reactionary" body, would oppose the "progressive" amalgamation, and advised them to stand "firmly and determinedly" against all opposition.⁹⁸

Two weeks after his appointment as general secretary for the amalgamated organization, Mr. Brais resigned from his position as general secretary of the Tailors' Union. The executive board of the Tailors appointed Mr. Thomas Sweeney to fill the vacancy, pending an election.⁹⁹ The appointment of Mr. Sweeney was later confirmed by a general election,¹⁰⁰ and he has held his position as secretary until the present date.¹⁰¹

Immediately following the action of the Tailors' Union approving the proposed amalgamation, an internal controversy of very considerable proportions arose in that union, due to the conviction on the part of a large number of members that the action had been taken hastily and under a misapprehension of its real significance. It was not long before this dissatisfaction found expression in an organized movement to secure a reconsideration of the vote. This movement centered in Local Union No. 5 of Chicago, where there was a strong majority against the amalgamation, but involved eventually a large number of local unions and members. The first direct evidence of the reconsideration movement is found in the Proceedings of the General

⁹⁸ *The Tailor*, January 26, 1915, p. 3. A great deal of violent criticism, some of it personal, was levied against the A. F. of L. and its officers during the entire discussion of the amalgamation proposal. It must be remembered, however, that the opposition of the A. F. of L. was not directed against the amalgamation idea itself, but merely against amalgamation with a seceding body. In this connection it should be noted that about January 1, 1915, the A. F. of L. had ruled that the Tailors' label could not be recognized under the name, "Tailors' Industrial Union," but only under the old name, "Journeyman Tailors' Union of America." Probably as the result of this ruling, the old name was restored on the title page of *The Tailor*, beginning with the issue of January 12, 1915. See A. F. of L. correspondence on the subject of the label, *The Tailor*, January 19, 1915, p. 4.

⁹⁹ *The Tailor*, February 9, 1915, p. 1, Proceedings G. E. B.

¹⁰⁰ Two ballots were necessary; the deciding vote is published in *The Tailor*, October 5, 1915.

¹⁰¹ February, 1917.

Executive Board for January 3, 1915.¹⁰² At this meeting a letter was read from the secretary of the Chicago union, endorsed by the local executive board, protesting against the whole amalgamation procedure. As the national executive board claimed to have acted within its rights, the protest was "received and filed." A short time later, the executive board of Local Union No. 5 of Chicago issued a circular to all local unions throughout the country, urging them to second the Chicago protest, and giving reasons why this should be done. This circular was followed by others, and eventually by a call for a conference to be held in Chicago March 27, 1915. In spite of warnings against "disrupters" issued in the official journal by the administration officials, who at this date were still favorable to the amalgamation,¹⁰³ the Chicago call was answered by 66 locals, of which ten, including Chicago, sent delegates in person,¹⁰⁴ and the balance sent letters endorsing the Chicago position.

Several meetings were held in Chicago, additional circulars were sent out, and a committee was appointed to carry on the agitation. The expense of the work was met out of contributions from unions interested in the movement. The protests of the Chicago union and of the conference committee, as indicated in their literature, were based in the main upon the following alleged grounds:

(1) That the time allowed for the vote on amalgamation was entirely inadequate, and made it impossible for the matter to be thoroughly presented in an intelligible way to the members of the Journeymen Tailors' Union.¹⁰⁵

(2) That¹⁰⁶ it is contrary to trade union policy and principles for a recognized union, such as the Tailors, to form any alliance or amalgamation with a faction of another organization

¹⁰² *The Tailor*, January 12, 1915, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *The Tailor*, February, 2, 1915, p. 3, article, "Disrupters Active, Warning."

¹⁰⁴ Former Secretary Lennon was one of these delegates and was active in supporting the protest of the Chicago conference. Circular letter No. 1, p. 1, list of delegates; *The Tailor*, March 2, 1915, p. 4, article by Mr. Lennon on "What the members of the J. T. U. of A. are entitled to receive at the hands of their general officers."

¹⁰⁵ Circular of Chicago union, entitled "Protest against trickery."

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

who have seceded from their parent organization, which was the case in the instance referred to; the Garment Workers' faction, headed by one Sidney Hillman, being a seceding faction from the legitimate union of the United Garment Workers of America.

(3) That the question as submitted was not a plain statement but a misleading one, and was submitted in that way in order to secure a favorable vote. The membership was misled and voted "Yes" upon the proposition, believing to a very considerable extent that the proposition for amalgamation was between our union and the United Garment Workers as recognized by the American Federation of Labor, when in truth, the intention was to amalgamate with the seceding faction of the United Garment Workers under the leadership of Mr. S. Hillman.¹⁰⁷

(4) That the proposed constitution for the amalgamation made no provision for the protection of the Journeymen Tailors' Branch, and that the plan proposed would result in the trade

¹⁰⁷ "Circular Letter No. 1," issued by Chicago conference committee. Without trying to go into all of the details of the controversy or into the personalities with which it was attended, some of which were very acrid, it must be admitted that the form in which the amalgamation proposition first reached the members was, to say the least, open to misunderstanding. It has been stated that the first official notice calling for a vote appeared in *The Tailor*, December 15, 1914, and this is correct; but in the preceding issue, that of December 8, it was conspicuously announced that a vote would be called for shortly, and it was in this preliminary announcement that the greatest opportunity for misconstruction was presented. After several "scare" headings calling attention to the forthcoming vote, appeared the following sentence:

"The General Executive Board of the T. I. U. I. has at this writing under consideration an agreement that will, if adopted, amalgamate the *United Garment Workers of America*, [italics are the writer's] represented by S. Hillman, President, and Jos. Schlossberg, Secretary, and the Tailors' Industrial Union, formerly known as Journeymen Tailors' Union of America."

It is obvious that to a member who was not familiar with the split in the Garment Workers' organization, and who was not aware that Hillman and Schlossberg were not the officers of the recognized union, the above statement would have been misleading, and could easily have led him to believe that the proposed amalgamation was with the recognized union. As a matter of fact, as we shall see later, 52 local unions that gave a majority for amalgamation on the first vote, gave a majority against it on the second, and it seems probable that some of the members of these unions did not understand the proposition the first time.

which belonged properly to the Tailors being "gobbled up" by the Garment Workers.¹⁰⁸

For the above reasons, and others of less importance, the conference demanded that the whole question of jurisdiction be re-submitted to a general vote under the following two heads:

First, shall the Tailors' Industrial Union amalgamate with the seceding faction of the United Garment Workers?

Second, shall the Tailors' Industrial Union comply with the instructions of the Philadelphia Convention of the American Federation of Labor to resume their former title, "The Journeymen Tailors' Union of America" and resume their claims of jurisdiction as in their constitution prior to 1914?

To understand the second demand, it is necessary to recall that in January, 1914, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor had given a decision indicating that the change of name and extension of jurisdiction adopted by the Tailors' Union in 1913 were in violation of the constitution of the American Federation of Labor. At the time, the organizations involved were requested to hold a conference, and to endeavor if possible to bring about a consolidation. Inasmuch as the organizations failed to do this, the full convention of the American Federation of Labor, in November, 1914, passed a resolution endorsing the report of the Executive Council in the matter of the Journeymen Tailors, and requiring the Tailors' Union to comply with the constitution of the Federation not later than April 1, 1915, on pain of suspension.¹⁰⁹

Although the supporters of the amalgamation affected to despise the influence of the A. F. of L., there is no doubt that the action of the Federation had a very considerable effect. It lay in the power of the Federation to withdraw its endorsement entirely from the Journeymen Tailors' label, and in such an

¹⁰⁸ Circular Letter No. 1, cited above. There seems to have been some ground for this fear on the part of the Tailors, inasmuch as they had only three members out of eleven on the Executive Council of the amalgamated organization, and would also be greatly outnumbered on a referendum, the Hillman faction claiming to have 50,000 members, while the Tailors had about 13,000. (The United Garment Workers' organization has never admitted that the Hillman faction had as many as 50,000; it is a matter very difficult to determine, as members are continually falling behind with their dues in all of the garment workers' organizations.)

¹⁰⁹ *Proceedings, A. F. of L. Convention, 1914*, pp. 370-373.

event this label would become practically worthless.¹¹⁰ That some, at least, of the Tailors recognized this is shown by the strong support given to the Chicago protest. As a matter of fact, there was a short period later when the Tailors' label was actually outlawed by the Federation.

The demands of the Chicago conference were presented to the General Executive Board of the Tailors' Union on March 28, 1915, by a personal delegation representing the conference. The Executive Board refused to accede to the demands in the precise form in which they were made, but pointed out that a proposition for reconsideration of the vote was already before the board, having been presented at the meeting of February 28, 1915, by Local Union No. 88 of St. Paul, Minn., and agreed that if the St. Paul proposition received the required number of seconds (one fourth of all the locals), the question would be re-submitted in the form demanded by the conference committee. The committee expressed itself satisfied with this action, and set about at once to secure the necessary seconds.¹¹¹ In this they were very successful, and at the meeting of the Executive Board on May 2, 1915, it was found that 100 local unions had seconded the St. Paul proposition. As only about 80 seconds were required, this number was amply sufficient, and in accord with its promise the board agreed to resubmit the amalgamation question and the other questions at issue. The form in which the questions were submitted was in effect the same as that recommended by the Chicago committee, but it was decided to make three heads instead of two, as follows:

(1) Shall our International be known as the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America?

¹¹⁰ A few organizations have succeeded in maintaining a successful career outside of the American Federation of Labor, but very few organizations that depend to any extent upon their label have succeeded in doing so. It is claimed by the United Garment Workers that the label of the seceding organization is worthless without the endorsement of the American Federation of Labor, and that firms that tried to use the label of the seceders have had their work returned to them, as union men affiliated with the A. F. of L. refused to buy it.

¹¹¹ Proceedings General Executive Board for February 28, 1915, *The Tailor*, March 9, 1915, p. 1; Proceedings for March 28, 1915, *The Tailor*, April 6, 1915, p. 1; letter of conference committee to Secretary Sweeney, *The Tailor*, April 6, 1915, p. 2.

(2) Shall our International return to the jurisdiction it claimed prior to January 1, 1914, as ordered by the A. F. of L.?

(3) Shall our International withdraw its affiliation from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America?

The vote was required to be at headquarters by July 3, 1915.¹¹²

Before concluding the account of the reconsideration movement, it is necessary to go back a little and see how actual efforts to operate under the amalgamation were working out. It will be recalled that a temporary organization had been effected at a joint meeting of the executive boards in Rochester, January 16 and 17, 1915. In accord with the action taken at this meeting, the payment of per capita tax by the Tailors to the amalgamated organization was begun February 1, 1915, amounting to \$1800 per month. The payment of this sum brought forth considerable protest from the dissenting element of the Tailors, who claimed that the whole amalgamation was illegal under trade union procedure; but was defended by the administration on the ground that the Tailors would get it back in the services of the organizers, all of whom had been placed under the direction of the Amalgamated. The real test, however, of the amalgamation plan came in New York City, where an effort was made to consolidate three local unions of custom tailors, including two unions of special order tailors affiliated with the Hillman union, and Local Union No. 390 of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America. The effort to find a basis of consolidation for these three unions met with a number of obstacles, of which the most serious was the evident intention of the garment workers' branch to retain control of the special order workers, although the Journeymen Tailors had been assured in the general conferences that the special order workers would be turned over to their branch. After some unsatisfactory negotiations the local officers of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of New York became convinced that there was no intention on the part of the garment workers to change their attitude on the subject of the special order tailors, and reported to this effect to the national Executive Board of the Journeymen Tailors, at the same time protesting against any further payment of per capita tax by the Tailors to the Amalgamated.¹¹³

¹¹² Proceedings, *The Tailor*, May 11, 1915.

¹¹³ Letter of John A. Petrone, in *The Tailor*, May 11, 1915, pp. 1-2; also article, "Some Reason," by William Block, *The Tailor*, April 20, 1915, p. 4.

The New York episode was of the greatest importance in the history of the amalgamation affair, for it was this episode, more than any other cause, that influenced Secretary Sweeney of the Journeymen Tailors to abandon his support of the amalgamation plan. As early as April 6, 1915, Mr. Sweeney wrote:¹¹⁴

Right from the first day to the present, we insisted on one thing. That was that all custom tailors should belong to our union. Up to the present time that is not carried out as we expected. No man can say that we agreed to anything else, and if any man or number of men think they can induce us to change our attitude on that point, they are mistaken. If the officers of the Amalgamation are not in a position to state exactly where the line is to be drawn on this question, they should be. If we are only to have the high class custom and a few label houses, then amalgamation is a one-sided affair.

And in the issue of April 20, 1915, after reciting the experience of the New York union, Mr. Sweeney said:¹¹⁵

So far as we know, the officers of the A. C. W. are in no way to blame for the unsatisfactory results in New York and elsewhere. They cannot force the special order Tailors into our union, but that is no good reason for the Journeymen Tailors' Union to continue paying one thousand eight hundred dollars a month for nothing—not even a say in how the organizers are to be distributed. . . . If we are to have amalgamation at all, we would have to reconstruct the whole thing. It is not possible to run it as it is now run, so far as we are concerned.

From this time on, the turn of sentiment against the amalgamation was rapid, and when the vote closed, July 3, 1915, it was found that the proposition to withdraw was carried, 3,961 to 1,339. On the proposition to resume the old name, "Journeymen Tailors' Union of America," the vote was 4,702 to 822; and on the proposition to resume the former jurisdiction, as ordered by the A. F. of L., the vote was 3,897 to 1,385.¹¹⁶

In explanation of the reversal of opinion indicated by these votes, which, in spite of what has been said, may appear to be inconsistent with the previous attitude of the union, as indicated by the first vote on amalgamation, it is well to undertake some further analysis of the votes. A comparison of the first vote on amalgamation, which closed in December, 1914, with the second vote, which closed in July, 1915, indicated that fifty-two unions

¹¹⁴ *The Tailor*, April 6, 1915, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ *The Tailor*, April 20, 1915, editorial, "Amalgamation not Satisfactory."

¹¹⁶ *The Tailor*, July 7, 1915, p. 4.

that gave a majority favorable to amalgamation on the first vote, gave a majority against it on the second vote, whereas there were only four unions that reversed their vote in the opposite direction. It is not certain that the members who voted on the question the second time were the same members as those who voted on it the first time, the total vote in each case being less than fifty per cent of the total membership.¹¹⁷ If we assume, however, that the group of voters in the two cases was approximately the same, the indications are that the vote against amalgamation on the second ballot included the vote of a large number of members who voted favorably to amalgamation on the first ballot. It is necessary, therefore, to account for the "conversion" of these members. It is obvious that the immediate propaganda for the reversal of the vote came from the Chicago conference, but the reasons which caused a number of members, in response to this propaganda, to reverse their previous decision, require examination. These members may be divided into the following groups:

(1) Members who voted for the amalgamation on the first ballot, believing that the proposition involved the union of Garment Workers recognized by the American Federation of Labor, but who reversed their vote when they discovered that the amalgamation was with a seceding body.

(2) Members who became convinced as the result of the attempt to put the amalgamation into effect that it could not succeed, either (a) on account of the opposition of the American Federation of Labor, or (b) on account of the difficulty of protecting the interests of the custom tailors' branch under the terms of the amalgamation.

(3) Members who at the time of the first vote were personal supporters of Secretary Brais, but who questioned his motives in resigning from the secretaryship of the Tailors' Union and accepting office with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and who experienced some reaction against the amalgamation on this account.¹¹⁸

In further explanation of the vote, it seems probable that the active propaganda conducted by friends of the amalgamation

¹¹⁷ *Cf. supra*, p. 113, note 94.

¹¹⁸ *The Tailor*, March 2, 1915, p. 4, col. 3, letter of A. Dahlman.

plan at the time of the first ballot tended to swell the favorable vote on this ballot; while on the other hand, the propaganda by the opponents of amalgamation at the time of the second ballot had a similar effect in the direction of defeating the proposition. It is desired to emphasize this point especially in connection with the "floating" or undecided vote, and also in connection with the indifferent element, which in the absence of an active propaganda would not vote at all.¹¹⁹

In consequence of the compliance of the Tailors' Union with the instructions of the American Federation of Labor, the union was reinstated in the good graces of the Federation, and the 1915 convention passed resolutions congratulating the Tailors upon their action, and confirming the full re-affiliation of the Tailors with the Federation.¹²⁰

Since the withdrawal of the Journeymen Tailors from the amalgamation, the question of forming a single union in the clothing trade has attracted only intermittent attention. In *The Tailor* for December 7, 1915, an article by Mr. Lennon was published, in which he favored the formation of a single International Union composed of the Journeymen Tailors, the United Garment Workers and the Ladies' Garment Workers. Each

¹¹⁹ The following statement, compiled from the returns on the two votes on the amalgamation question, lends support to the explanations here advanced:

Analysis of returns of 146 unions that voted on both ballots

	1st ballot		2nd ballot	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
52 unions that voted YES on the first ballot, and NO on the second:	1454	404	139	1597
4 unions that voted NO on the first ballot, and YES on the second:	50	60	75	43
37 unions that voted YES on the first ballot, and YES on the second:	1153	102	755	107
53 unions that voted NO on the first ballot, and NO on the second:	119	1554	139	1761
Totals:	2776	2120	1108	3508

Note: The returns of unions that did not vote on both ballots are omitted, as they are without value for purposes of comparison.

¹²⁰ *Proceedings, A. F. of L.*, 1915, p. 401, report of committee on adjustment; *ibid.*, pp. 119-121, résumé of all action by the A. F. of L. in the matter of the Journeymen Tailors.

branch was to be guaranteed self-government and the protection of its peculiar interests. As a step in this direction a permanent conference committee of three members from each organization was recommended, this conference committee to carry out the highest possible degree of coöperation between the three organizations, and to extend its powers to such an extent as might be approved by a referendum vote of the organizations.¹²¹ The most recent utterances on the subject include suggestions from Mr. Sweeney for the drawing up of propositions for the reorganization of the clothing trades by a joint committee of the "rank and file" of the three organizations, officers to be excluded; also propositions from the official organ of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, favorable to recognition by the A. F. of L. of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union, (the Hillman union), and a possible resumption of the movement for amalgamation between this union and the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America.¹²² None of these propositions seems likely to receive official attention before the convention of the Journeymen Tailors' Union in August, 1917, and in view of the attitude of the American Federation of Labor at its 1916 convention, it is not probable that any movement involving the Amalgamated Clothing Workers will receive the approval of the Federation.

CONCLUSIONS ¹²³

1. The jurisdiction question in the tailoring industry is the outgrowth of industrial changes, which have resulted in a large part of the work formerly done by journeymen tailors of the old type being done by workers on a lower economic plane.

2. The Journeymen Tailors' Union committed a serious economic blunder when it allowed the new systems of custom tailoring to grow up outside of its jurisdiction.

3. The movement for unqualified amalgamation of the unions in the clothing trades, and for a leveling of craft lines and dif-

¹²¹ *The Tailor*, December 7, 1915, p. 3, col. 4.

¹²² *The Tailor*, February 13, 1917, p. 3, col. 1, editorial; *ibid.*, col. 2, article reprinted from *The Ladies' Garment Worker*, entitled "A Tribute to the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America."

¹²³ The conclusions here presented are from the standpoint of the journeymen tailors themselves. The effects of the jurisdiction policy on the industry at large will be considered in Ch. IV, "General Economic Bearings."

ferences of trade union policy, is closely associated with the Socialist movement, the growth of which, both in these trades and in the general labor movement, is partly due to the accession of European Socialists.

4. The movement for an alliance or federation of unions in the clothing trades, whereby the autonomy of each interest would be preserved, is favored by the conservative elements, and is not confined to the Socialist group.

5. It is not probable that any movement for amalgamation or federation in the clothing trades could be successful except under the following conditions:

(a) The interests of those unions which have developed their wages and union resources to the highest point must be protected.

(b) There must be a conviction of absolute good faith on the part of all the amalgamating or federating elements.

(c) The field of custom-made clothing of the grade and price heretofore manufactured mainly by journeymen tailors must be regarded as a unit in the plan of amalgamation or federation, regardless of the method of production.

(d) The more prosperous branches of the industry must lay aside their prejudices and coöperate sincerely for the interest of the less prosperous branches.

(e) The coöperation of the American Federation of Labor is essential.

The reasons for most of the above conclusions, it is believed, are sufficiently evident from a perusal of the history just concluded. The second conclusion, however, which from the economic standpoint is believed to be the most important, requires some further comment. It seems certain that the refusal of the Journeymen Tailors for a number of years to admit the workers on new systems of manufacturing custom clothing was an economic mistake. If they had assumed jurisdiction over the new systems, several results might have been expected:

(1) The new systems being almost without exception carried on in workshops and on a basis of time payment, conditions for standardization of hours and wages would have been more favorable than they had ever been under the old systems, and it is probable that considerable improvements could have been effected.

(2) In this event the so-called cheap custom trade would not

have been as cheap as at present, and the fine trade would not have been undermined as rapidly.

(3) In so far as the fine trade did suffer from the competition of the cheaper systems, the tailors displaced would have been enabled, on account of the improved conditions in the cheaper trade, to obtain work there at living wages.

(4) Where the journeymen tailors found it necessary to strike for their demands, it would not have been so easy for the employers to get their work done on the cheaper systems.

As frequently pointed out by the advocates of admitting the cheap custom tailors, all of these results would have been a benefit to the skilled journeymen. However, these arguments were not sufficient to overcome the prejudice on the part of the skilled tailors against the cheaper workers, nor the fear on the part of the tailors in the smaller towns that the slightest encouragement from the union would accelerate the movement of the trade to the larger cities, in which, in the main, the cheaper systems were being carried on. Where these tailors made their mistake was in the belief that the movement in question could be checked by any means whatever. The new systems afforded an opportunity to satisfy a popular demand at less cost. This being true, the drift of the work away from the old systems was inevitable, and could not be materially affected by any opposition or prejudice on the part of the unionists; whereas if they had undertaken to organize the new systems, they could not, indeed, have prevented their establishment, but might have had a voice in their management. It is admitted that the tailors in recent days have seen their error and endeavored to adopt a different policy, but it is now rather late to make the change, inasmuch as the class of trade involved has either drifted into contractors' shops, where much of it has remained unorganized, or else it has been organized by the garment workers' unions, who have had neither the strong motives nor the financial resources that the tailors would have had to raise it to a higher plane.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL ECONOMIC BEARINGS

It is the purpose of this chapter to consider some of the general economic consequences of the presence and activity of unions in the custom tailoring trade.

For purposes of economic analysis we consider that portion of the clothing industry which is concerned with the making to order of coats, vests, trousers and overcoats.¹ In general, the customer desiring to purchase any of these garments has his choice of garments made under four different systems of production; namely, (1) the old-fashioned journeymen tailoring system; (2) the team or sectional system; (3) the special order system; and (4) the ready-made or garment working system. In the first case he will go to a local merchant tailor, who will take his measure, cut the pattern or have it cut, and turn the work over to skilled journeymen tailors to finish. In the second case he will also deal with a local merchant tailor, but the work will be done in accord with the new system of subdividing the work which we have already described in connection with the efficiency movement.² In the third case he will deal with an agent: either a traveling man, a local special order agent dealing exclusively in that line, or a local merchant tailor or haberdasher who maintains a special order department. The agent will take the customer's measure and specifications and send the same to a factory, generally in another city, where the work will be done under a highly developed system of subdivision, employing in the main employees who rank as garment workers rather than

¹ We do not forget that both journeymen tailors and garment workers are employed in the making of clothing for women, but since this department of the industry concerns only a few members of the Journeymen Tailors' Union, it is considered unnecessary to include it in the present analysis.

² *Cf. supra*, p. 51.

tailors. In the fourth case the customer will go to a ready-made clothing store and from the proprietor's stock select the garments which suit his taste and come the nearest to a proper fit, these garments being made by garment workers in factories under a system which admits of even a higher degree of subdivision than the "special order," inasmuch as all sections of garments can be made in quantities and standard sizes.

We may conceive of four suits of clothes, identical in materials and specifications, and differing only in the fact that they are made under the four different systems of production mentioned above. In order to arrive at a conclusion with reference to the kind of effects which have resulted from the organization of unions in the custom tailoring trade, we may assume first a situation in which there are no unions in this trade, but the different systems of production are as described.³ Let us assume that in such a situation the suit made on the first system costs the customer \$30; on the second system, \$28; on the third system, \$25; and on the fourth system, \$22. It is not necessary to account for all of the possible reasons for such differences in prices; it is reasonable to conclude, however, from our knowledge of the several systems of production, that if such differences in price exist, they are due in the main to two causes: (a) differences in labor costs; (b) differences in the scale of production, the ready-made system, on the whole, having the greatest advantage in this respect.

Into a situation like the above, let us now suppose that the

³ This assumption involves another, namely, that in the absence of unionism the four different systems would have grown up. Upon this point, however, we believe that there is no doubt. The rise of the ready-made clothing industry in the first instance was due to the demand for cheaper clothing than could be made to the order and measure of each customer, even under a completely non-union régime. The very rapid development of the same industry was due to the invention of the sewing machine and the organization of the industry on a large scale in factories, and there is no reason to believe that unionism was the determining cause of either of these phenomena. Given the ready-made industry, the development of methods of making custom clothing by which the competition of the ready-made could be met in part was also inevitable, inasmuch as the methods of making ready-made clothing lent themselves to the making of clothing to measure, were cheaper, and were known to enterprisers who were under pressure to retain their hold upon the custom trade.

element of unionism in the field of custom tailoring is gradually injected, until workers in this field are organized to the same extent as at present. In this event it is reasonable to suppose that the wages of custom tailors will be raised; and if, for the sake of argument, we assume that unionism in some form has reached all three of the establishments in which the three custom-made suits of our illustration were manufactured, we may assume that wages and labor costs have been increased for all of these establishments, but in a different measure in each, inasmuch as unionism is strongest in the journeymen tailors' trade, less strong in the "sectional" trade, and weakest in the special order trade. Let us assume that under the new conditions, in order to make the same percentage of profit as before, the merchant tailor employing the old system must sell the suit for \$35; the merchant tailor employing the sectional system, for \$30; and the special order firm, for \$26. We may suppose the existence of certain buyers, who were just willing to pay \$3 for the superiority of the special order suit over the ready-made suit; \$3 for the superiority of the "sectional" suit over the special order suit; and \$2 for the superiority of the journeyman tailored suit over the "sectional" suit. These buyers, under the circumstances of our problem as first phrased, would be indifferent as to whether they purchased the \$22 ready-made suit, the \$25 special order suit, the \$28 "sectional" suit, or the \$30 journeyman tailored suit. But under the new circumstances it is no longer a matter of indifference with these buyers which suit they purchase. Each of them will now prefer the ready-made suit at \$22 to any of the other suits.

There is another class of buyers, we may assume, who insist on a suit made to the individual order and measure, and for whom under the first conditions it would be a matter of indifference which of the three custom-made suits they bought; we will assume, as in the case of the other group of buyers, that a journeyman tailored suit is worth to them just \$2 more than a "sectional" suit; and a sectional suit just \$3 more than a special order suit. Under the new conditions a "sectional" suit will cost \$4 more than a special order suit, and a journeyman tailored suit \$5 more than a "sectional" suit. It is obvious that under these conditions such buyers will purchase the special order suit,

and that the merchant tailor will lose their trade. In a similar way it can be shown, that even among buyers whose tastes confine them either to "sectional" or to old-style journeyman tailoring, a rise in prices such as we have assumed, which adds more to the price of the journeyman tailored suit than it does to the price of the sectional suit, will cause some buyers to abandon the former in favor of the latter. It is only the buyers who insist upon a journeyman tailored suit under all circumstances, being persons who can afford to take this stand, who will continue with certainty to purchase the journeyman tailored suits.

From the above argument we conclude that the introduction of unionism into the custom tailoring industry should have the effect: (1) of reducing the proportion which clothing made to measure bears to all clothing manufactured and sold;⁴ (2) of affecting unequally wages and prices in different branches of the custom tailoring field, resulting in a redistribution of the patronage within this field, to the disadvantage of those branches in which prices are raised the most.⁵

These conclusions are difficult to verify from observation and

⁴ The same conclusion should hold good, no matter what is the historical order of the introduction of the different systems of production. As a matter of fact, there was a time when custom tailoring held practically the entire field, and the large development of the ready-made, sectional and special order systems is decidedly recent; moreover, there were unions of custom tailors long before any of these systems acquired any considerable proportions; whereas in our illustration we assumed that the ready-made and other new systems were fully developed when unionism was injected into the custom tailoring field. Either in the actual case or in the assumed case, the field of custom tailoring, as compared with the whole field of clothing, is narrowed; and in both cases, *after the garment working industry comes into existence*, the narrowing of the custom field is due to the process described, whereby a portion of the custom trade is transferred to the ready-made; but before the ready-made industry came into existence in its present form, the presence of unions in the custom field, in so far as it raised prices in that field, narrowed the field by stimulating the initiation of the ready-made system, as well as by inducing greater economy in clothing or by inducing a larger use of substitutes (for example, second-hand clothing).

⁵ We have ignored hitherto the influence of unionism in the garment working trade, as a matter foreign to the thesis, but it is obvious that unionism in this trade, in so far as it raises the price of ready-made clothing, will tend to *retard* the movement of patronage to this field from other fields.

experience, for the reason that the ready-made clothing industry has effects upon the custom tailoring industry of precisely the same kind as those which we should expect from the introduction of unionism in the custom field. The competition of the ready-made clothing industry, independently of any union influences, tends to reduce the proportion of all clothing which is made to measure, and to affect unequally different systems of production and different ranges of prices within the custom tailoring field itself; effects precisely similar to those which our analysis showed should result from the organization of custom tailors into unions. There are no statistical data at hand for examining directly the consequences, either of the ready-made clothing industry or of the introduction of unionism; nor for separating the consequences of these two causes. There is no doubt, however, that in the past fifty years the proportion of all clothing made to measure has greatly decreased, while there has been a corresponding increase in the proportion of ready-made clothing; and in the past twenty years it is the writer's opinion that the old-style merchant tailoring has lost quite as much trade to the sectional and special order systems as to the ready-made system. The old-style tailoring has held its own fairly well within a range of prices of suits from \$50 to \$150, but in the case of suits ranging from \$50 down to \$20 the competition of the new systems of custom tailoring and of the ready-made system has been keen. As far as the results of unionism in the custom tailoring trade are concerned, they appear to have been the following:

(1) There has been an increase of wages, which in the case of the higher priced suits the merchant tailor has found it possible to pass along to the consumer, but which in the case of the lower priced suits has obliged the merchant tailor to accept lower profits, and, coupled with other causes, has driven some merchant tailors out of business. In general, the increase of wages has contributed to decreasing the proportion of all clothing that is made to measure.

(2) The increase of wages in the case of journeymen tailors employed on the old system has accelerated the movement toward new and cheaper systems of production of custom-made clothing, which developed, for a time at least, outside of union influence, on account of the exclusive policy of the Journeymen Tailors' Union.

(3) The field of custom tailoring on the old system has been narrowed, and the number of journeymen employed on this system reduced, more rapidly than would have been the case had there been no union.

(4) The wages of individual journeymen have been greater, and more uniform as between different firms, than they would have been if there had been no union.

From the standpoint of the employer, therefore, the effect of unionism in the custom tailoring trade has been to increase the pressure, already strong on account of the competition of the ready-made system, tending to reduce his profits. At the same time, within those ranges of prices somewhat out of reach of the competition of the ready-made system, unionism has tended to prevent price-cutting among merchant tailors, and to hold up to some extent standards of quality and workmanship.

From the standpoint of the consumer, unionism in the custom tailoring trade has not meant depriving the consumer of cheap clothing, because he could always avail himself of the ready-made, but it has meant that he has had to pay more for the luxury of having his clothing made to measure; and the "marginal consumer" for custom-made clothing at the increased prices has been obliged to satisfy himself with a lower grade.

GLOSSARY

Journeyman tailor :— a tailor who has learned through a definite apprenticeship or equivalent training how to make an entire garment by his own labor, and who is employed upon clothing made to the order and measure of the individual customer.

Individual system :— system under which the journeyman tailor alone, or assisted by one or more helpers hired by himself and under his supervision, makes the entire garment.

Sectional or team system :— system under which each garment or suit is made by a “team” composed of a relatively small number of workers, each skilled in some particular process.

Factory system :— system under which the garment or suit is made in a factory, like ready-made clothing, under a highly developed system of subdivision; differs from the manufacture of ready-made clothing only in the fact that each garment or suit is made to fit the specifications of the individual customer.

“Old-line” or “old-style” tailoring :— tailoring done by skilled journeymen tailors working on the individual system.

Fine store, fine trade :— these expressions are used to distinguish merchant tailoring establishments selling suits within the approximate price range of \$35 to \$150, and employing the individual system or a sectional system capable of turning out an equally high grade of work.

Cheap trade :— applied to suits made to measure, but selling in general from \$35 down; especially applied to clothing sold under the mail order or agency system, and made under the factory system.

Bushelman :— a journeyman tailor employed by a merchant tailoring establishment or by a ready-made clothing establishment to make alterations and repairs in clothing after it is finished.

Single-handed :— without helpers.

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